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# JAPANESE IN BATTLE

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## INTRODUCTION

THE object of this pamphlet is to indicate briefly the chief characteristics of Japanese behaviour in the field as they differ from our own and that of western nations generally. Principles and methods which the Japanese share with most other armies are touched on lightly or passed over. Japanese *strategy*, though it too has strong peculiarities, is not dealt with in this pamphlet, which restricts itself to *tactics*, major and minor. The description of Japanese tactics is based on observation of Japanese practice in the field rather than on the rules laid down in Japanese military handbooks, to which their practice often bears little relation.

### 1. Tactical characteristics and the principles of war

1. *The Principles of War*.—As a general introduction the following paragraphs review the manner in which the Japanese apply the principles of war as laid down in our Field Service Regulations.

2. *Offensive action*.—Japanese soldiers from the highest to the lowest are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of offence, in which they tend to see the solution of all problems. The almost instinctive reaction of any Japanese commander in a new, unexpected or difficult situation is to look for some way to assume the offensive.

It must, however, be pointed out that the characteristic Japanese method of attack often results in a tactical defensive. This is the outflanking march and blocking of the enemy's L. of C., accompanied possibly by small frontal attacks, first to hold and secondly to encourage withdrawal. The method is to get round the enemy on to his Ls. of C. and make strong defences on them; the enemy, after encouragement by small frontal attacks, jitter columns and the fear of being cut off, will then attempt to withdraw and be 'impaled', as it were, on the defences of the road blocks. The manoeuvre is not a flank attack but an outflanking movement to seize defensive positions which the enemy in his turn must attack. Direct assault is commonly used only when absolutely necessary, as for instance in ordinary counter-attack.

3. *Maintenance of the object* is strongly marked in Japanese operations and is a source both of strength and weakness. Once battle is joined the Japanese pursue their object with the greatest energy and the last ounce of strength, and their indifference to the consequences tends to give them an advantage in actions of the "slogging-match" type when both sides are approaching exhaustion.

On the other hand, maintenance of the objective is often carried to a pitch when lack of flexibility becomes disastrous.

In the Japanese Arakan offensive of February 1944 the Japanese forces were committed to a large enveloping movement intended to annihilate at least two of our divisions. The plan, for which a hard and fast time table had been provided, went drastically wrong soon after first contact, but as days went by it became increasingly clear that no new orders had been issued by higher command. Similarly, in Manipur in April—June, the fiction that Imphal could still be captured was maintained by 15 Army long after the necessity for a revision of the object should have been clear. The result was the wearing down of the available forces in a series of fruitless attacks to the point where a costly withdrawal could not be avoided.

4. *Economy of force*.—The Japanese are enabled to secure to a remarkable degree by their toughness in defence and their willingness to accept risks and if necessary leave forces to fight and die unsupported in sectors not considered vital. They can thus concentrate for their principal effort a remarkably high proportion of the total forces. A case in point is the way in which 18 Division in the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys was sacrificed to the interests of the Manipur offensive in the spring and summer, 1944.

On the other hand at all levels ambitious objects are regularly attempted with a relative strength which in Western armies would be regarded as inadequate. Japanese tactical instructions constantly reiterate that by manoeuvre especially by superior morale small forces can overcome large ones. The effect of this tactical doctrine has been a tendency to attempt to attain objects out of all due proportion to the forces in hand. The striking successes obtained early in the East Asia War by small forces against ill-trained or demoralised troops have probably helped to confirm this Japanese tendency.

5. In their interpretation of the principle of *concentration* the Japanese differ widely from western and particularly from German methods both in the assembling and the handling of forces for an operation.

The characteristic form of attack indicated in para. 2 above implies dispersion and involves advance on distant objectives in a number of columns not mutually supporting. Of the initial orders for the Manipur offensive in March 1944 not one mentioned assault on any of the main objectives. To isolate and then encourage the enemy to withdraw was the first object. The destruction of the enemy would come about by the disorganization inherent to a certain extent in any hasty withdrawal.

In committing forces for the attainment of a main object the Japanese observe the principle of concentration in that they hold nothing back which could be used, committing even specialist troops in infantry roles. A consequence, however, is that the commander finds himself without reserves under his hand to influence the further course of the operation. Both in attack and defence reserves in the true sense of the term are conspicuously absent from Japanese practice. Similarly, reinforcements are commonly committed to battle piecemeal, as they arrive.

6. *Surprise* is carefully attended to by the Japanese. Though ruses (including the use of disguise and of the language of the opposing troops) are extensively employed, and although in the early stages of the war extensive use of a fifth column made it possible greatly to increase the methods by which the enemy was taken by surprise, the principal Japanese method of securing surprise remains the use of country regarded as impassable. This, together with choice sometimes of foul weather, is relied on to place troops more sensitive to ground and climate at a disadvantage. Where the success of a movement depends on surprise the Japanese also show a high degree of skill in concealment. From the exceptional marching powers of the troops—they are capable of covering thirty or more miles per day—the Japanese profit by their ability to feed them and to open routes for them, which make it possible, by choosing a circuitous path through difficult country, to the line of retreat of a force based on a road. These advances are characterized by the rapidity with which their engineers improve tracks to a sufficient standard for the immediate purpose. If the chances of living on the country are small, forward troops with their own animal transport may carry up to a month's supplies. The Japanese soldier has been trained to carry up to 58 lbs. though it should not be imagined that he habitually carries a heavy load of rations and equipment, for like us he prefers to fight as lightly equipped as possible. Impressed local inhabitants, with carts if the country is suitable, supplement their carrying powers, whilst opportunities are never neglected to seize local supplies and utilize captured stocks.

7. *Security*—The general impression is that the Japanese are less than normally attentive to security. Their deep and often thorough patrolling is carried out in the service of offensive action and not of security; for the security of their own flanks and rear the Japanese tend rather to rely upon retention of the initiative. In minor tactics inattention to security is noticeable, and parties on the move or in camp are often unduly liable to surprise.

8. For judging the Japanese practice of *co-operation* whether between the arms or between air and ground there has hitherto been inadequate material on which to base a judgment, owing to the low scale of air effort generally and the minor part hitherto played in Japanese operations by artillery and the A. F. V.

## 2. Morale

9. A year ago all evidence showed that the morale of the Japanese troops was extremely high. This was not confined to the armed forces, but was also the case with civilians. A high ranking official of a (then) neutral country, writing from Tokyo in the middle of 1943, said "I wish with all my heart that I could report that these hardships are weakening the civilian's morale but I cannot. His will for war and victory is as hot as ever".

This was the spirit instilled into the Japanese soldier from early childhood and throughout his training. They are taught to believe that the Emperor is a manifest of God descended from the Sun Goddess; that they owe everything to him and that

they themselves are God's chosen supermen—soldiers of heaven. This teaching and the added belief that death in battle is the soldier's highest aim in securing the perfect after life must lead to fanaticism.

It is possible, however, that confidence in their legendary superiority, based as it is to a large extent on myths, may be shaken by a series of defeats not suffered by the Japanese in wars previous to the present one.

10. There has been this year (1944) a slight but definite change, and although the Japanese troops in Burma still fight with courage and determination, sometimes against much superior forces, their diaries contain far less heroics than a year ago. The Japanese forces in Burma have this year launched two offensives which, the troops were told, were to bring them down into the plains of Bengal and Assam. Both their offensives failed and as a result many soldiers no longer possess that fanatical enthusiasm for the war which they had in the past. Some want to finish the job and go home ; others complain about their officers and N. C. Os., their food—or rather lack of it—and the many discomforts of the conditions in which they live and die. The glories of dying for the Emperor have paled and in a few exceptional cases the decline in morale has been sufficiently general in a unit, or group of units, to call for the writing of special directives on the subject. In an order of the day captured in the Arakan in April 1944, the G. O. C. of a Divisional Infantry Group says :—"The general condition of the Infantry Group does not admit optimism. To win the battle we must develop to the utmost the spirit of Yamato. [Symbolic of the conquering destiny of Japan]. To indulge in thoughts that we cannot win because our weapons are inferior is already to have lost the battle. As for the throwing away and careless abandoning of arms—these things must on no account happen. To abandon or throw away weapons bearing the Imperial crest is the height of humiliation, and represents a collapse of morale".

11. Further, an extract from a special order issued by the commander of the 33 Divisional Infantry Group in the Imphal area in Burma on the 2nd June 1944 reads ".....Still, should by any chance any delinquencies occur amongst you, I am considering what exceptional measures I shall have to take against the offenders.....In short, a commander must not hesitate to stain his sword with the blood of his own troops if it is to uphold the honour of his unit".

12. These examples suffice to show a tendency which the Allied effort in and over Burma has created during the last seven months (Dec. 43—June 44). *At present it is no more than a tendency*, but it will develop as our pressure on the enemy is increased and sustained. It cannot be repeated too often, however, that the Japanese are, generally speaking, still fighting with determination, and every prisoner so far captured is convinced that Japan will ultimately win the war.

## CHAPTER I.—DEFENCE

### 1. General Principles

13. "Passive defence," it is stated in an official Japanese document, "has the disadvantage of making it easy for the British to build up their strong fire power. We must avoid static defence as much as possible. Even when fully on the defensive we must work to keep our forces mobile".

The very word defence is, whenever possible, avoided. This, for example, was the wording of the "intention" paragraph of an operation order for the defence ;—

"The unit will secure its present positions for an advance. While continuing generally to disrupt the enemy's activities it will prepare for future attack".

The Japanese seldom sit and do nothing for long. If the front is quiet, they may be preparing a surprise on one or both flanks.

14. These threats vary greatly in scope : some are made by nothing more than a handful of men who, having approached under the cover of darkness throw a few grenades and fire an automatic weapon at a rear platoon which imagines itself to be a mile or two from the nearest enemy. Others involve a company or more who, seizing at night a strong natural feature in our rear, endeavour to disrupt communications, and make a nuisance of themselves until they are attacked and annihilated.

For example, after the costly failure of their February 1944 offensive in the Arakan, the Japanese were thin on the ground, tired, and completely on the defensive, but still they infiltrated a small force (a battalion not more than 400 strong), to a position about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles behind our foremost troops and these disrupted communications until they were located and destroyed.

This tendency to place troops and leave them isolated without apparent intention of relief or supply at points behind our lines, the retention of which they consider vital to their plan, has been repeatedly noticed. It does not appear to matter to them as to what finally happens to these troops once their purpose has been fulfilled.

15. The Japanese normally fight to the last man, but references in Japanese documents to withdrawal without orders and the experience of recent fighting show that exceptions to this rule are not uncommon. Surrender, however, as opposed to withdrawal, is still very rare.

16. Surprise is achieved by silence and concealment. Until attacked, troops occupying forward localities very seldom open fire even if the target offered is a good one. By careful observation it is nevertheless often possible to locate at least some of the enemy's bunker positions ; to quote an extreme case, all three bunkers in the position illustrated on page 30 were pin-pointed and destroyed before we attacked it.

17. On the defensive the enemy as far as possible avoids initiating any movement himself during the hours of daylight. Studying a hill which he is known to occupy, one is struck by its completely deserted appearance. There is neither noise nor movement, and perhaps a few feet of obvious camouflage alone suggest his presence. There have, however, been exceptions to this. If we by-pass his defended locality and occupy a hill behind him, the normal daylight silence is broken and carriers transporting food and ammunition, troops sneaking down to a stream to fill water-bottles—indeed, any form of movement is greeted with a fusillade of automatic fire and perhaps one or two shells from the battalion gun "whizbang".

### 2. Frontage and Depth

18. If the strength of the forces at his disposal permits, the Japanese Commander occupies a position in depth. If, however, he is faced with the alternatives of frontage or depth, he appears to sacrifice the latter in order to maintain the former.

A captured Japanese document gives as the normal frontage for a battalion 1500 to 2000 yards, and a depth of 1000 yards. In Burma the following frontages have been used in the defence :—

- (i) Jungle-covered hills rising from about 100 feet on one flank to 1000 feet on the other : 5000 yards front for one battalion plus
- (ii) Two-thirds jungle-covered hills (mostly under 400 feet), one-third paddy fields and villages : 8000 yards front for two battalions.

- (iii) Plain dotted with jungle-covered hills 100 to 200 feet high : 5000 yards front for one battalion.

The depth of such positions has been 1000 to 3000 yards. Such large frontages are held by sacrificing mutual small arms support between localities, which may be 2000 yards or more apart. Artillery and mortar support is, of course, little affected by this wide dispersion.

19. It should not be assumed from the three examples given above, that the Japanese will always be thin on the ground. In positions which they consider vital to the defence of some important centre, one finds the battalion occupying a frontage more in keeping with the text book. For example, at Rathedaung in 1943 a battalion occupied a frontage of under 1500 yards (see Page 21). Rathedaung covers an important approach to Akyab, and is only sixteen miles from Akyab Island.

### 3. Layout

Examples of typical defence layouts, from platoon to battalion positions, are shown at Appendix "A". They show no remarkable difference in principle from our own layouts.

#### All-round defence

20. The principle of all-round defence is not applied as an invariable rule, but given the time to develop a position and the troops to hold it, both all-round defence and depth will be achieved. (Examples, pages 21 and 22).

21. The basic garrison for a locality in the main defensive position appears to be the platoon, which, if low in strength, may not even be divided into sections. Three such localities are sometimes sited to provide mutual fire support and to form a company area to which medium machine guns and/or mortars may be attached.

#### Covering positions

22. Covering positions are occupied in order to slow down the enemy's advance on to the main position and to provide observation whilst denying it to the enemy. In the early stages of making contact isolated section and platoon localities are found up to about 5000 yards in advance of the main position. The maximum distance was observed in country where the ground is half paddy fields and half small hills, but in hills thickly covered with jungle the most reported was 2000 yards.

Under sustained pressure covering troops normally fall back until, depending on the type of country, they may be found watching likely lines of approach 300 to 1000 yards in advance of the main position.

In some cases covering troops have offered determined resistance and accepted comparatively heavy casualties before withdrawing, but their normal role is one of reconnaissance and delay, not of fighting to the last man and the last round.

#### Alternative and dummy positions

23. Alternative positions are dug, and dummy positions, troops and weapons have been reported in the South West Pacific. Some tactical notes, based on experiences in New Guinea, were recently (April 1944) captured in Burma. Here it says : "The use of constructing dummy positions a short distance in front of the real ones in order to draw off the enemy's fire has obtained good results".

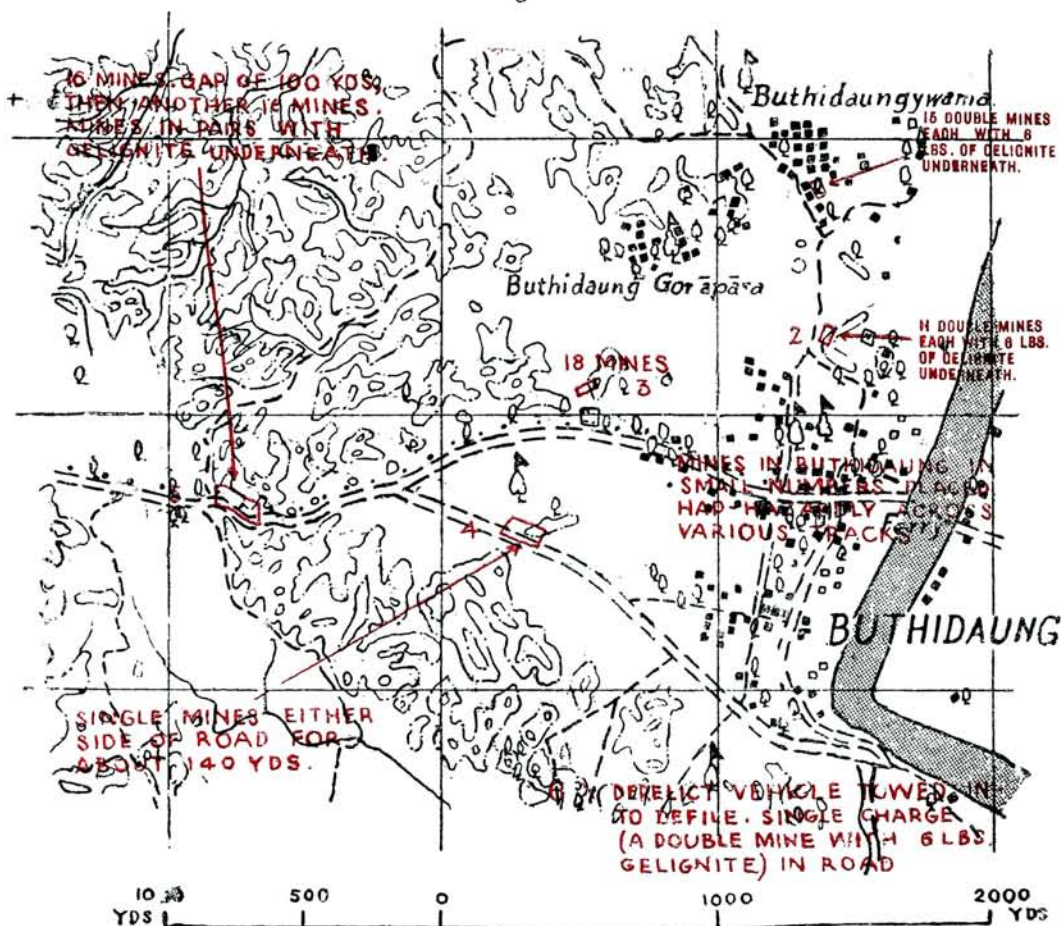
In Burma the Japanese are making increased use of alternative positions.

#### Reverse slope positions

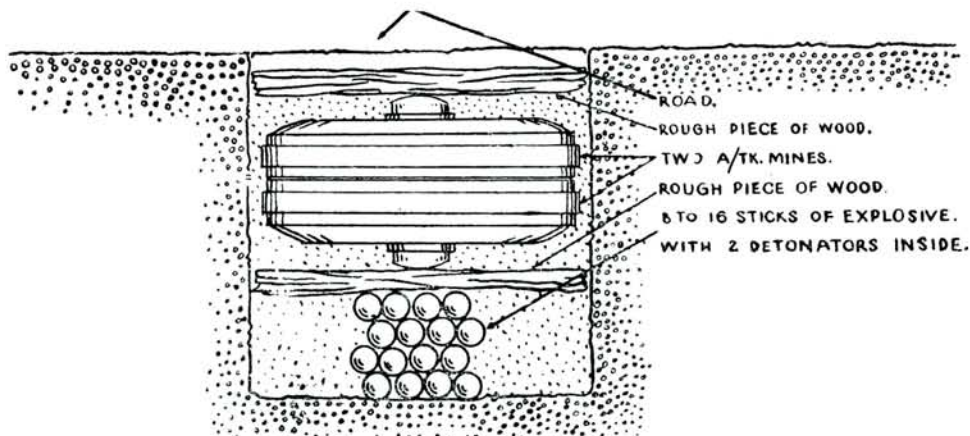
24. This year the Japanese in Burma have begun to build bunkers on the reverse slopes of hills, from which they shoot up assaulting troops as they come over the crest. This use of the reverse slope had previously been reported by the Americans in the Kuriles, but it is not yet very common in Burma where the steep gradient will often prevent the siting of a post to shoot up-hill.

A recent situation report reads : "Night 25/26 May. . . . . Our troops over-ran the first enemy position but were heavily engaged *by fire from reverse slopes* when attempting to advance further". This may become a common practice, particularly at night.





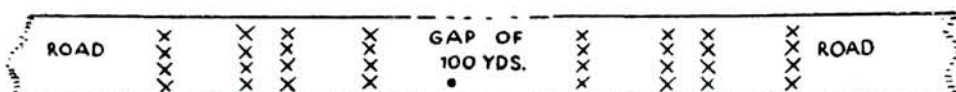
The mined approaches to Buthidaung



This is how the charges in fields 1, 2, 5 and 6 were made up

2 YDS. 1 YD. 2 YDS.

2 YDS. 1 YD. 2 YDS.



X = MINE

How field 5 was laid out

#### 4. Field Works

##### Wire

25. The Japanese have used comparatively little wire up to the present, except in the case of beach defences and around one aerodrome. Double-apron fences have been constructed both of normal height and also about a foot high to serve as a double apron trip-wire fence.

In front of positions so far captured in Burma the type of fence most commonly seen consists of a row of 4 ft. posts to which are attached three strands of barbed wire. This fence may run parallel to the foremost trench and at a distance of about 20 yards from it, or it may zig-zag through the bushes and trees at the foot of the hill on which the locality is sited. In the latter case it appears to be sited with the intention of leading troops, who follow it, in the direction of M. G. posts. An elaboration of this lay-out is to construct two fences (see Example, Page 20).

Trip wires are used on paths and likely approaches to positions. These often have a few tins attached to them to give warning of our approach.

In addition to fences and trip wire attached to pegs, a single strand of loose wire is sometimes laid in hedges and bushes.

##### Steel and cement

26. There have been few instances of the use of either steel or cement for inland defences (as opposed to coastal defences) in Burma. But both these materials have been used in the construction of island defences in the Pacific, cement being used for coast defence gun emplacements and steel for observation posts. Cement pill-boxes have also been constructed on the Andamans.

It is improbable that they will be met in great numbers inland in Burma.

##### Minefields

27. Up to the present the Japanese in Burma have not used mines in large numbers anywhere. The "field" is generally confined to roads and tracks and to the grass each side of them, but mines are sometimes laid on a broader front in order to cover defiles or places in which vehicles are likely to deploy off the road.

28. The Type "93" mine, which can be used in an anti-personnel or anti-tank role, is not very effective against tracked vehicles, but may blow a track. Lately, however, the Japanese have been boosting this mine and using it on a larger scale with some success. An improvement in his use of minefields and the type of mine employed is therefore to be expected.

29. Opposite is a sketch map showing how the approaches to Buthidaung were mined this year, and this example may be regarded as typical of the extent and layout of Japanese mine fields so far experienced in Burma.

#### 5. Weapons

##### Machine Guns

30. Following normal practice the Japanese make the machine gun the principal weapon of the defence when the country is open enough. Automatic weapons are sited to fire along prepared lines—lanes being cut in the jungle if necessary—but it has been noticed recently that well placed smoke usually silences them, which suggests that fixed lines are not always used. Medium machine guns are sited well forward to cover the main lines of approach. They are generally sub-allotted to platoon localities.

During the defensive battle, MMGs sometimes fire along a line about 10 yards from the forward edge of Japanese F. D. Ls.

While automatic weapons are frequently to be found on high features and the Japanese have no qualms about occupying the crest of a hill, where at least a simple trench system is normally found, there is a new trend apparent in the siting of all automatic weapons ; they are coming further down the hill. One Japanese commander has gone so far as to say that M. Gs. should be sited on the forward slope about 35 yards down the hill thus avoiding our artillery shells which he expects either to hit the crest or to fall on the rear slope.

Our troops attacking a hill feature about 70 feet high in the Arakan early in 1944 were half way up the hill when they were enfiladed with automatic fire which appeared to come from a direction either level with or slightly below them.

Where the sides of a hill are very steep, however, automatic weapons are still found on the crest.

In country of small hills interspersed with paddy fields and villages, machine guns are often dug into the banks of the square village ponds found in this type of country.

### **Mortars and Grenade Dischargers**

31. Mortars of 3 inch or larger calibre may be allotted to forward battalions, but the high-angle weapon most frequently used by troops occupying foremost defended localities is a 2 inch grenade discharger of which there are three in each platoon. This is a rifled weapon which throws a small shell 700 yards.

Once an attack is launched, mortar and grenade discharger shelling is frequently directed on areas which cannot be reached by flat trajectory weapons. Particular attention is paid to probable lines of approach and likely forming up places.

The Japanese often bring down mortar fire on defensive positions occupied by their own troops. This particularly applies to bunker positions which have been surrounded or over-run by our forward elements but may still be in action. A good example of this occurred on the Arakan coast early in 1943, where our troops who had captured an area which contained a bunker were heavily bombarded by mortars whilst trying to throw grenades through the loop holes.

### **Anti-Tank Weapons**

32. The Japanese 47 mm A. tk. gun has now been taken into general use by independent anti-tank gun units in Burma, and it is probable that all types of Japanese artillery capable of engaging tanks will shortly have armour-piercing ammunition.

Besides the 47 mm weapon, A. tk guns likely to be met include a 13 mm and a 20 mm H.M.G. and the 37 mm gun which is usually found with infantry.

A hollow charge grenade has been captured in Burma. This is fired from a launcher attached to the muzzle of a rifle and it can probably be aimed with reasonable accuracy up to 50 or 60 yards.

The Type "93" (1933) mine is still in use, but only in pairs, whilst the magnetised anti-tank mine, the prussic acid bomb and Molotov cocktails are issued as tank hunting weapons.

### **Artillery**

33. The primary tasks of Japanese artillery in the defence in Burma have been harassing and counter-battery, whilst a certain amount of defensive fire has also been experienced.

*Harassing fire* has been directed against—

- (i) Areas showing signs of movement—for example, dust rising out of a valley, or vehicles seen entering a valley.
- (ii) Vehicles moving across the open (even single vehicles are frequently engaged).
- (iii) Bodies of troops moving across the open.
- (iv) Hill features occupied by our foremost infantry.
- (v) Newly captured objectives (up to 20 shells of any calibre soon after we have occupied the objective).
- (vi) Headquarters.

*Counter-battery fire* usually takes the form of a shoot of 15 to 20 shells, whilst as an alternative to fire, counter-battery suicide squads, commonly numbering between 20 and 30 men infiltrate and attack gun positions with the object of

placing charges and destroying the guns. Most of these attacks have failed in their object.

*Defensive fire.*—During the defensive battle Japanese artillery shells probable forming-up places, lines of approach and assaulting troops and tanks in the open.

34. Up to the present Japanese guns have normally been sited singly and, on rare occasions, in pairs. A normal shoot is 12 to 24 rounds, after which the gun, unless it is in a very safe place, is moved to an alternative position. Japanese artillery does not normally fire at night.

With aircraft overhead guns near the battle area cease fire in order not to give away their positions.

#### *Snipers*

35. The extent to which snipers are employed varies greatly with each front. In the Arakan recently (March—April 1944) they were hardly ever met; on the other hand situation reports from the Imphal area include such references as “Sniper particularly active” and “After X Bn had reached its second objective Y Bn passed through them to deal with snipers”.

Although sniping varies a great deal in intensity, there are certain places where sniper posts may be expected—

- (i) above small advanced positions,
- (ii) on the flanks of localities,
- (iii) covering lines of approach to the Japanese main positions,
- (iv) covering paths in our own area,
- (v) covering gaps made in our telephone cables (this has been reported once).

### **6. Counter Attack**

#### **Immediate Counter Attacks**

36. The Japanese launch immediate counter-attacks against troops who have captured part of a locality. These small local counter-attacks may be made by only a dozen men led by an officer; they are preceded by a shower of grenade discharger shells and the charge is made with automatic weapons. This immediate counter-attack may be launched five to ten minutes after the locality has been penetrated. A wild war cry, to which is sometimes added the shout “Charge!” in English, gives warning of what is impending.

#### **Night Counter Attacks**

37. As an alternative to immediate counter-attacks the Japanese sometimes wait till dark before they attempt to recapture a lost feature. If the first night counter-attack does not succeed, it is sometimes followed by a second and even a third attempt.

#### **Meeting Counter Attacks**

38. A third form of counter-attack has been experienced in the encounter battle, *but it must be emphasised that it is exceptional*. In this, the enemy does not wait for our troops to reach the hill or other feature he is occupying. Instead, he comes forward to meet them, his advantage on these occasions usually being that he is going down-hill and we up; also he may avoid any covering fire we have organized.

## CHAPTER II.—THE ADVANCE TO CONTACT

### 1. General

39. A force advancing is preceded by advanced guards the major tasks of which are to gain information, brush aside minor opposition and, when the main enemy force is encountered, to give the main body time to deploy and envelop it. In order to fulfil these tasks Japanese covering troops advance with speed on the broadest possible front.

The speed with which the advance is conducted cannot be over-emphasized, and it is important to note that the commonest reaction to first contact is wide envelopment.

### 2. Reconnoitering and Striking Elements

40. Provided the terrain permits the use of transport, the several parallel columns are preceded by small parties of troops on bicycles or in lorries, and possibly accompanied by one or two tanks or armoured cars which cover their deployment on first contact. These leading elements are particularly vulnerable to ambush. A formation often employed consists of four to five cyclists followed at a distance of some hundreds of yards by a group of about sixty more. These small parties are really no more than reconnoitering elements whose task on first contact is to move forward on foot in order to discover the strength of the opposition and the extent of the front occupied.

41. Behind them come either what may well be termed main guards, or the main body itself. Main guards are strong in infantry and engineers and normally include artillery or mortars. Also they will probably be accompanied by tanks or armoured cars.

### 3. First Contact

42. On making contact the leading elements extend on both flanks, shouting, firing and employing any other ruses calculated to make the defenders open fire and disclose their positions. They also site a machine gun to fire down the road or track on which they have been held up. This gun is carefully sited and protected and difficult to dislodge.

43. If possible the leading elements infiltrate, and once behind the forces opposing them they fire crackers and automatic weapons in order to give the impression that they have, in large numbers, encircled their opponents.

44. If the advanced elements are not able to infiltrate they take up a position astride the road and, supported by machine guns and mortars, endeavour to pin the opposition.

### 4. Demonstrations

45. Great importance is attached to demonstrations which vary from a few men dashing into the open to draw fire, to large bodies of troops being employed to make a feint attack in order to attract the defenders' attention away from the real one. Fire, loud talking, the rustling of bushes, calling out in English, Urdu or Gurkhali—all or any of these ruses may be employed to attract the defenders' attention in the wrong direction, or to persuade him to open fire prematurely and thus give his position away before he need do.

### 5. The Encounter Battle

46. It would appear from the speed with which the battle develops that the leading elements are in close communication with the forces following them. One man pack R/T sets are normally attached to the headquarters of advanced detachments.

47. It is apparent from the short time between the first contact and first attack that some units are committed to an enveloping role from the earliest stages and the outflanking of the opposition begins almost simultaneously with the holding up of the foremost elements. In small units—for example companies and platoons—attempts to envelop the opposing troops follow very shortly after first contact and the speed with which these enveloping movements are launched suggests the employment of a tactical drill. Pressure is maintained frontally whilst the flank attack or attacks proceed. As the opposition stiffens the normal attack develops. This is discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III.—ATTACK

*" Our plans and our reconnaissance must be kept secret and we must attack at an unexpected time and place We shall seldom be able to gain surprise by attacking the opposing forces on terrain which permits a fairly easy approach ".—Japanese Dictum.*

### 1. Major Tactics of the Attack

48. A study of Japanese offensive operations indicates that with the regularity almost of a drill the Japanese constantly aim at placing bodies of troops across their opponents' L of C, and thus compelling them either to attack on ground of their own choosing, or to withdraw. These plans tend to overlook the air factor and the help the air arm can give to beleaguered garrisons.

49. In the first Burma campaign, from the time that the Japanese crossed the Salween River at Moulmein until the last action at Shwegyin on the Chindwin there are very few recorded instances of deliberate attacks. Rather was their superior mobility used to force us to attack troops who had succeeded in occupying a position behind us. They chose an area on the L of C, to hold which would cause us the maximum embarrassment, and the focal point of the battle which ensued was often a road block. In fact, the Japanese fought defensively in country peculiarly suited to the defence. One big exception to this method during the first Burma campaign was an attack launched against one of our brigades at Kyaukse ; here the Japanese suffered considerable losses and the attack failed completely.

50. As a typical example of these tactics a narrative of the operation by 55 Division in February 1944 to isolate two British divisions in Arakan is given in some detail at Appendix " C ".

### 2. Minor Tactics of the Attack

#### Reconnaissance Prior to an Attack

51. When the Japanese do make setpiece attacks they precede them by normal careful reconnaissance made with the object of discovering our strength, dispositions and soft spots against which can be directed the main effort of attack. Various ruses are employed to draw fire, including exposing small parties in the open. If cover permits, scouts may be left in observation for long periods close to our foremost defended localities.

Stress is laid on the value of prisoners as a source of information when preparing an attack.

Forward troops infiltrate, taking advantage of all available cover to creep forward. This is in the nature of a battle reconnaissance which goes to ground when held up by the defenders' fire but brings light machine gun and mortar fire to bear on any position it has discovered.

#### Frontal attacks

52. Small local frontal attacks are often made in order to capture some specific feature, but it is clear from captured documents that the Japanese also regard the frontal attack as a means of achieving a large scale break-through, for which "the whole strength will be concentrated at one spot and the break-through effected with lightning speed". The penetration is to be deep, and the objectives are to be the enemy centres of command including Divisional Headquarters. It should be realised, however, that such attacks are on a small scale, rarely exceeding battalion strength.

If the attack on the chosen sector does not succeed, it is not uncommon for the main effort to be directed temporarily against another part of the front the old axis being reverted to later.

#### Flank and Rear Attacks

53. Flank and rear attacks continue to be the form of attack most commonly attempted and whether it is a section or a division attacking the principles are the same ; part of the force is used to attract the enemy's attention to the front whilst the rest of the force attacks from the flanks or rear, preferably from the rear.

These tactics are clearly described in a training memorandum captured early this year. It reads—

“The attack must be made in a direction that the enemy does not expect and where there is cover from enemy fire. In attacking the enemy on hill tops, use must be made of dead ground and positions must almost invariably be assaulted from the rear. The enemy's routes to the position will usually be a guide as to which is the rear of the position. The following method of attack is usually successful. . . . Part of the force is employed to distract the enemy either by fire or shouting while a second party assaults from the reverse directions. It must be remembered that the party detailed for distraction is liable to come under enemy hand grenade fire and it must therefore always be placed beyond throwing range. It is also subject to enemy artillery fire, and, in order to minimise casualties should be properly dispersed. The time for the distraction of the enemy must be co-ordinated with the time of the attack from the rear by the main body and not *vice versa*”.

### 3. Supporting Weapons

54. Whereas formerly the Japanese often regarded a swift bayonet charge as the only essential for a successful attack, supporting weapons are now very much in evidence, and field artillery and mortars often put down fairly heavy concentrations as a preliminary to an infantry assault supported by machine gun fire and accompanied by a few tanks.

55. In reading the following, it must be remembered that the close nature of most of the Burma theatre of operations has given predominance to those weapons having a “searching” characteristic, such as the mortar bomb and grenade.

Weapons with a flat trajectory have only a limited use in this type of country.

If, however, future operations extend to more open country increased employment of weapons with a flat trajectory is to be expected.

#### Artillery

*“Artillery should be disposed to give the maximum assistance to the assault. If the best possible use is not made of fire power to provide systematic support, it will be found that most attacks fail”*.—Japanese Dictum, 1944.

56. The Japanese in Burma have only recently (April 1944) commenced using artillery on a large scale in putting down concentrations prior to attacking. The maximum artillery effort encountered up to June 1944 on the Imphal front in Burma is given below. With L. of C. conditions better than they were in this theatre and improved ammunition situations, heavier concentrations must be expected in the future.

57. This increased interest in, and use of artillery has been forced on the Japanese. They find now that they have to attack our prepared positions, and in order to do so artillery support is essential. The following extract from a report by one of our own observers well illustrates this point. . . . .

“The Jap has shown, perhaps, no startlingly new methods in his tactics up here, but we have learned a lot about his old ones and we have compelled him to change some of them. A year ago, for example, you would never have found him making headlong attacks on Ningthoukhong and Bishenpur. To get our garrisons out of those places he would not have fought them but he would have gone somewhere else and made us fight him. Now, that ruse no longer works because he has discovered that we know the answer to the road block or his seizing of hills somewhat behind our forward troops. Now he finds that to get our forward positions he has to attack them”.

58. The Japanese normally employ their guns well forward and the speed with which they insinuate them into the front-line has been particularly noticeable. On occasions, mountain guns, well dug in, have been employed as anti-tank weapons to some effect.



*Maximum Artillery Effort on the Imphal Front, May 1944***(a) Firepower—**

22 Med gun hows  
14 Mtn guns  
2 Regtl guns  
2 Bn guns

**(b) Wt of shelling—**

200/300 rounds

**(c) Duration—**

(i) General HF	15/45 mins.
and registration	(V slow)
(ii) HF prior to an	18/36 hrs.
attack	(slow rate)
(iii) HF prior to main	45/60 mins (normal)
assault	
(iv) CB fire	10/15 mins (normal)

V slow about 10 rounds per hr.

Slow    "    20    "    "    "

Normal  "    20/40 "    "    "

**(d) Mtn guns operate usually in secs (2 guns),**

Regtl or Bn guns singly,

Med guns in secs, sometimes mixed 150 mm and 105 mm.

Section positions are usually sited with one gun in depth behind the other.

**Tanks**

59. Recent fighting in Burma between March and July, 1944 has seen the Japanese employing tanks. The total number committed during this period was between seventy and eighty. Certain infantry battalions receive training in Japan in tank co-operation. One such battalion was engaged in these operations.

60. The normal role for tanks has been close support to infantry, in which they were used as mobile armoured pill-boxes. The number of tanks employed at one time varied between two and eight, and the infantry strength from about one company to a battalion.

On one occasion only did the Japanese offer armoured battle. Some of our tanks had gone forward to help a party of British and Gurkha troops, who were cut off with their wounded behind the enemy lines. On the march to join these infantry, our tanks were ambushed by five Japanese tanks, which had their armament trained along the track. These tanks had been sited off the road on either side, and had been skilfully concealed beneath foliage and creepers. The leading pair of our tanks was caught by the full blast of all the Japanese guns at short range. A second salvo from the Japanese set one tank on fire by hitting the engine. The crew baled out, all escaping except one gunner, who was killed in his tracks by heavy machine gun fire from the Japanese tanks. The remainder of our tanks went through the two which had been knocked out and attacked the others, disabling all five of them, and killing the crews. This action lasted about eight minutes.

On another occasion in an attack on one of our road blocks, two light tanks were used in support of probably one weak infantry company. They broke through, and managed to get some motor transport past the block for the loss of about 56 men. We subsequently counter-attacked and restored the position.

61. On Tarawa Atoll in the South West Pacific seven light tanks were run down into previously prepared positions, allowing the guns to fire through slits in special pillbox shields, already in place over the positions.

62. The limited use of tanks by the Japanese, and their emphasis on the purely infantry support role is in no way surprising, bearing in mind the limitations imposed by design, armour and armament of the tanks employed. The only Japanese tank capable of dealing effectively with our heavier tanks is the Medium Type "97" (1937) Special, which has as its main armament a long-barelled 47 mm gun. Other types are the Medium Tank Type "97", mounting a short-barrelled, low velocity 57 mm gun—essentially an infantry support weapon—and the Light Tank Type "95" (1935), which mounts a 37 mm. gun. In addition to these there is also a Tankette mounting a 37 mm gun. None of these weapons, except the 47 mm whose



anti-tank potentialities have not yet been determined, is to be considered as a serious threat to our own tanks, but, as they all fire both armour piercing and high explosive shell, they are useful in the roles they have been given.

63. In future there can be little doubt that, bearing in mind the advantages which we gained by our surprise use of tanks, and our successes, the Japanese will try to employ tanks on an increasing scale, mainly in close support of infantry.

### **Mortars**

64. In the attack, mortars are used well forward to neutralise quickly and effectively defended localities holding up the advance. Targets are engaged with which machine guns cannot deal and for which artillery is not available or perhaps suitable. Centres of resistance are often indicated to mortar detachments by firing tracer, the mortar fire being directed at the intersection of two tracer streams.

An important point is the mobility of the 81 mm mortar. Although of slightly larger calibre than our 3" mortar, it weighs only 52 lbs, firing a 6½ lbs. bomb up to about 2000 yards. It may, therefore, be met where our own 3" mortar from considerations of terrain or time may not be able to get into action.

Mortars are skilfully used by the Japanese, who are adept at firing a few rounds and changing position rapidly. It is essential, therefore, to neutralise them as soon as they are first sighted.

### **Machine Guns**

65. "The main task of the M.M.G. in the attack is close co-operation with, and support of forward troops. Machine guns operate with rifle companies to increase their fire power; these weapons are not designed for independent use."—Japanese Training Manual.

Experiences in Burma show that the above principles are generally followed.

In the attack medium machine guns are used well forward, often in exposed positions, and concentrate their fire on centres of resistance which are holding up the attacking infantry. Indirect fire is rarely employed.

### **Small Arms**

66. The principle of fire and movement is well understood by the Japanese soldier, but the standard of shooting with small arms, apart from their use of the grenade discharger, is not so high as that in our own army. For close support (within 100 yards of the enemy) the Japanese rely to a large extent on the 50 mm grenade discharger, which they use with great accuracy and skill, also on the L.M.G. which they keep well forward. This is well illustrated by the fact that the types "96" and "99" LMGs are both fitted with bayonet attachments.

The final assault with the bayonet is often made under a hail of grenades. The rifle is rarely fired from the hip.

### **Flame throwers**

67. Although it is known that the Japanese in Burma are in possession of flame throwers, there is no definite proof that this weapon has yet been employed there.

In the South West Pacific it has frequently been identified with engineer assault detachments in attacks against strong points, and there is no reason to suppose that the flame thrower will not be used in the Burma theatre. The Japanese lay down that in such assaults all loop holes of strong points are to be attacked by flame-throwers simultaneously. To be effective the enemy point out that the flame thrower must be used at a range of 10 metres (10·8 yards).

## **4. Attack Against Fixed Defences**

### **Preparation**

68. The predominant considerations in an attack on a fortified position are surprise, preparation and concentration. The Japanese ability to achieve surprise extends to all forms of warfare and has already been discussed. Their preparations for an attack of this nature are extremely thorough, and in the case of Hongkong may be said to have extended over a number of years. Where possible, consular staffs, spies, and even officers and men in disguise have been employed in peace time to make accurate and comprehensive surveys of fixed defences and vital communications, while fifth columnists are employed for the same purpose in war. Besides the study of defences and communications, preparation includes the accumulation of engineer stores of suitable size to bridge probable demolitions, and the selection

and training of special assault troops who have been chosen for their high intelligence.

The operation begins with air attacks on aerodromes, anti-aircraft gun positions and headquarters, and later the air effort is directed against fortifications.

The fire of all types of artillery is brought to bear on pill-boxes and "direct fire with medium artillery" is recommended for "demolition and neutralizing fire".

### Assault

69. The assault is to be made by infantry and engineers, and the employment of tanks is envisaged "to neutralize loopholes and destroy pill-boxes".

The technique of the assault is thus described by an officer who was in the battle of Hongkong:—

"Numbers of assault troops would infiltrate through our lines under cover of darkness, and would hide in trees and bushes whence they would snipe our troops from the rear.

"The position to be attacked would be subjected to very heavy dive-bombing and artillery fire during the day.

"Assault troops in parties of ten would stalk the position, making such good use of ground and cover that they were rarely seen. The position, meanwhile, would be subjected to intense mortar fire, and fire from machine guns to penetrate the iron doors and windows of concrete shelters and pill-boxes.

"When all parties of assault troops were in position in the dark, the mortar fire would suddenly increase. Then the parties of assault troops would rally, and assault the position, throwing hand grenades and firing Tommy\* guns, and at the same time receiving supporting fire from light automatics and machine guns.

"If our troops took cover in their concrete shelters, the storm troops would surround the position, and, approaching from the rear, would drop hand grenades down the air vents of the shelters, killing the inmates; any one trying to escape from a shelter was picked off by someone waiting with a Tommy\* gun to receive him"

(\* Probably the Typ '96' LMG).

### 5. Night Attacks

"Stormy or foggy nights afford good opportunities to attack with surprise"—Japanese dictum. . . . . *Route marches at night for a distance of 30 Km (18½ miles) are to be practised. This training can be carried out in the Mayu Range. Stress is to be laid on maintenance of direction*—Captured document.

Where the Japanese have, in recent months, taken the offensive, moves, at any rate during the preliminary stages of the operation, have been made largely at night.

### Training for Night Attacks

70. The Japanese, who favour night attacks as a means of achieving surprise and closing early with the enemy, have been quick to realize that to be successful this type of operation demands a very high standard of training. The conscript is carefully trained to fight in the dark, his lessons beginning on the barrack square in bright moon-light and culminating in movement on a dark night across difficult country. His powers of seeing and hearing at night are developed and he is taught to move silently yet boldly. Finally, he is practised in control by whistle and Verrey light.

### General rules

71. Japanese regulations lay down certain essentials for the success of any night operation. They are Simplicity, Maintenance of Direction, Control and Surprise.

Whilst Simplicity is laid down as the first requirement, a high standard of training has enabled the Japanese to practise forms of night advance and attack which can hardly be regarded as simple; these include the capture of successive objectives and the leap-frogging through of a second assault echelon.

### Control

72. Direction is maintained by compass, by the employment of guides and by choosing unmistakable natural and artificial features to march on. Flares, white stakes, strips of paper, chalk and flour have all been used, and finally a modern

touch has been added by the employment of fifth columnists to light bonfires where they will best serve as a point to march on. The same method has been employed by the Germans in Europe.

Night attacks are, where possible, directed uphill and the objectives chosen are usually well defined natural features such as a hill, bridge or stream.

A flare fired over the objective may be the signal for the assault, whilst Verey lights are occasionally fired to give direction.

Control is exercised by imitating bird calls, and red flares have often been used to show troops the direction of advance. Whilst the method is simple and—provided the leader knows where he is—fool-proof, the employment of flares sacrifices surprise and gives as much information to the observant defender as to the attacker.

### **Fire Support**

73. The need for simplicity and for using small bodies of troops against limited objectives is still mentioned in training instructions which also point out the desirability of a silent approach—if necessary by crawling—as a preliminary to the assault. However, the increased attention which the Japanese are paying to firepower has also had its influence on night attacks, and in some cases the stealthy approach and “sudden onslaught” has given way to more deliberate methods. To quote from a situation report :—

“During the night 19/20 April, the Japanese followed a concentration of 75 mm and 105 mm arty fire with an attack on our positions supported by four medium tanks. One of our pl posns was overrun”.

74. In the absence of artillery fire the assault is sometimes preceded by elements who crawl forward and put down a grenade barrage. In addition, the assault may be preceded or accompanied by machine gun fire. This has so far been high in order not to endanger the assaulting troops and must be regarded more as an element in the war of nerves than as covering fire. It must be assumed, however, that given suitable lines of fire—which are usually available in hilly country—machine guns will be used to fire into the objective over the heads of the attacking infantry. Japanese regulations lay down that failing a more active role the medium machine guns of the attacking force will occupy a secure position and will co-operate with the reserve.

Attacks which do not at first succeed may be repeated two or three times during the night with intervals of one to two hours.

Three examples of Japanese night attacks in Burma will be found at Appendix “D”.

## **6. Consolidation**

75. A training memorandum captured in February 1944 gives the following instructions on this phase of the attack :—

“In view of the fact that immediately after we have carried the enemy’s position he brings superior airpower to bear and launches a counter-attack as soon as they have gained the objective troops will disperse forward and to the flanks. Troops on the actual position will be kept to a minimum. The main force will be held in concealment in the jungle nearby, where it will await any enemy counter-attack which it will envelop and attack in the rear”.

This particular form of cunning has never been reported from the battle front but it is reasonable to assume that given favourable circumstances it will be attempted.

## CHAPTER IV.—PATROLS AND RAIDS

### 1. Information, Reconnaissance and Patrols

#### Information

76. The Japanese in Burma have been unable to improve upon our  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, 1 inch and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inch Ordnance Survey maps of which they are using both captured originals, and reproductions upon which translations have been super-imposed. The information which the earlier maps provided was in some cases supplemented by a detailed study in peace time of the probable area of operations. This study involved the "planting" of commercial photographers in places of operational interest and other forms of "economic" penetration the primary task of which was espionage.

Considerable success was also achieved in organizing the fifth column through which it was possible to continue the collection of information after photographers, barbers, tattoo artists and all the other Japanese who had found their way westward had either left hastily or been interned. With fifth column assistance it was possible to obtain up-to-date information on dispositions and defences and during mobile operations to direct aircraft on to headquarters and other suitable targets.

Before the Manipur offensive in March 1944 the Japanese used patrols of fifth column agents trained in recording topographical information behind, forward and to the flanks of our positions. This well planned and organized system gave them valuable information for their subsequent advance and infiltration in this very close type of country.

#### Reconnaissance

77. During the early days of the war in the South West Pacific and Burma, the Japanese often subordinated reconnaissance to speed of advance. Frontal attacks were launched against imperfectly known positions and bold decisions were taken even where information was lacking. The initial offensive had succeeded and whatever the cost the momentum was to be maintained; the operations evolved themselves into one vast encounter battle in which the Japanese, having seized the initiative, sought to maintain it. As resistance hardened, however, their attention to reconnaissance became once more evident and operations in Burma in particular show an intimate topographical knowledge which could only have been obtained by extensive patrolling and by the employment of local inhabitants as guides.

#### Patrols

78. Patrols vary in strength from a Lance-Corporal with five or six men to an officer's patrol with eighteen or more other ranks. Normal Japanese patrol activity includes reconnaissance and attempts to draw our fire at night in order to pin-point our positions. At a time when we had little experience of jungle warfare, Japanese patrols had some success in infiltrating between localities and persuading troops new to the area to engage each other with fire at night. This ruse has now become ineffective, but it is mentioned here in case it is tried out again on troops new to Burma.

The use of small patrols in a purely reconnaissance role has often been reported. According to the nature of the country and the task involved these patrols may either remain in observation in one place or make a reconnaissance involving a march of several days during which they are entirely dependent on what they carry themselves. Patrols of this nature often consist of three to six other ranks commanded by an officer or N. C. O.

If it is considered that the task involved does not warrant the employment of a patrol a couple of scouts may be used instead. Their tasks may be to lie in hiding near our positions and observe.

What we understand by fighting patrols do not appear to be employed in the Japanese Army; instead, there are suicide raiding parties discussed below.

### 2. Raids

79. According to a document captured in the S. W. Pacific Area there are three distinct roles for units allotted the task of operating behind our F. D. Ls.—

(i) Raids on artillery positions and local Ls of C followed by withdrawal.

The unit assigned to the task is called a Teishintai or *raid-unit*.

- (ii) Raids to disrupt our rear communications and then withdraw. The unit assigned to this task is called a *Betsudotai* which can be translated as "Detached force" or *Flying column*.
- (iii) Penetration and occupation of a position. Position to be held to the last man. The role is to pave the way for the main attack which may leap-frog through it. The unit assigned this role is called a *Toppatai* or *Penetration unit*.

NOTE.—The three terms in italics will be used in the paragraphs which follow :—

80. There have been several examples of *raid-units* attempting counter-battery assaults in Burma and on one occasion they penetrated to a depth of 5000 yards in order to attack a Brigade Headquarters. One Gunner officer who had experienced five counter-battery suicide attacks—each made by a party of between 20 and 30—said that *as long as one was ready for them* they were of nuisance value only. In the five attacks he quoted we had a few casualties but not a single gun was put out of action.

81. Occasionally, as an alternative to actually attacking the gun positions small parties of Japanese armed with automatic weapons have shot them up from hill tops nearby.

82. Captured documents show that *raid-units* have occasionally been given airfields as their objectives, their task being to destroy aircraft and airfield installations.

In these raiding parties sometimes infantry and sometimes engineers predominate. Except for the addition of explosives their arms and equipment are normal.

83. Whilst the functions of *flying columns* and *penetration units* are in theory somewhat different, in practice in Burma they have overlapped a great deal and in every case their task has formed an integral part of the general Japanese plan of operations. Thus, when our left flank was enveloped in the Arakan in February 1944 a detachment 150 strong, a large proportion of which were JIFs, infiltrated through the hills to a point on our L. of C. over 10,000 yards behind our foremost troops. Here they attempted to carry out their task which was "to disrupt the enemy's communications and throw his rear areas into confusion". They did slight damage to some bridges and burned some transport but otherwise did not have much success; it was clear, however, that they were intended to harass our main L. of C. west of the Mayu Range whilst the Jap offensive was proceeding on the East of the Range.

84. We have had two clear examples of *penetration units* in Burma—

- (i) In March 1943 a detachment of about one company with medium machine guns attacked and occupied a hill about 3500 yds behind our F. D. Ls., at Rathedaung. This was one of the first moves in a general Japanese offensive in the Arakan.
- (ii) In March 1944 the Japanese maintained a position about 2000 yds. behind our F. D. Ls., near Buthidaung. Except as a base from which patrols could operate and as a position which drew off some of our troops in occasional attempts to liquidate it, little tactical value can be claimed for it. It was in the centre of a mass of small hills and as the centre of this mass had nothing to do with our operations or L. of C. it could be left alone. In other words, the Jap had occupied a feature which, once we had driven him off the outer edge of it, we were no longer obliged to attack.

To sum up on the threat to our rear—

85. Parties of about a company may infiltrate and occupy a position 2000 to 4000 yards behind our F. D. Ls with the intention of holding out till the main Japanese advance reaches them.

Small parties (20 to 30) may penetrate to a depth of up to 5000 yards and attempt to raid Brigade Headquarters and battery positions.

Larger parties (company to a battalion) may attempt penetration up to about 15,000 yds. (that is the maximum we have experienced) with a view to disrupting our L. of C. or attacking any suitable objective, such as an airfield, and causing confusion in rear areas generally.

86. The deeper the penetration the shorter the time spent on the objective.

**CHAPTER V.—ROAD BLOCKS****1. Purpose**

87. The Japanese employ road blocks—

to cut off a force retiring,  
to protect one or both flanks of an encircling movement.  
or, as part of a defensive system.

**2. Siting**

88. As far as possible road blocks are sited in positions where they effectively prevent all movement until attacked and cleared; this is particularly the case in defence when they are most likely to be encountered on defiles, the possession of which is vital to an advancing force. The following sites have been chosen in the past—

Area of a bridge upon which several routes converged,  
Single road with dense jungle on both sides,  
Centre of a town or village.

The exact position may be just over the crest of a rise, or round the bend of a road—in fact, anywhere where vehicles will be close upon the road block before drivers can stop or turn round.

**3. Construction**

89. Roads may be blocked with felled trees or vehicles. Some blocks have been formed simply by firing at point blank range at the first few vehicles to round a bend or clear a crest. Occasionally roads have been blocked by a series of three obstacles sited at approximately half-mile intervals.

**4. Fire Cover**

90. A road block position may be covered by a force varying from a small party with a machine gun to a whole regiment. If not brought quickly to battle and destroyed small holding forces are often reinforced, until finally the block becomes a well organised position defended with the greatest determination.

Blocks are normally covered by an infantry gun sited about 50 yards from the block in a position from which it can fire straight down the road. If we are using tanks, the 37 mm gun must also be expected. At the same time machine guns—light or medium—deny the road to unarmoured troops. Sites chosen invariably include cover on both sides of the road in which troops protecting the flanks of the road block conceal themselves.

# APPENDIX "A"—EXAMPLES OF JAPANESE DEFENSIVE LAYOUTS

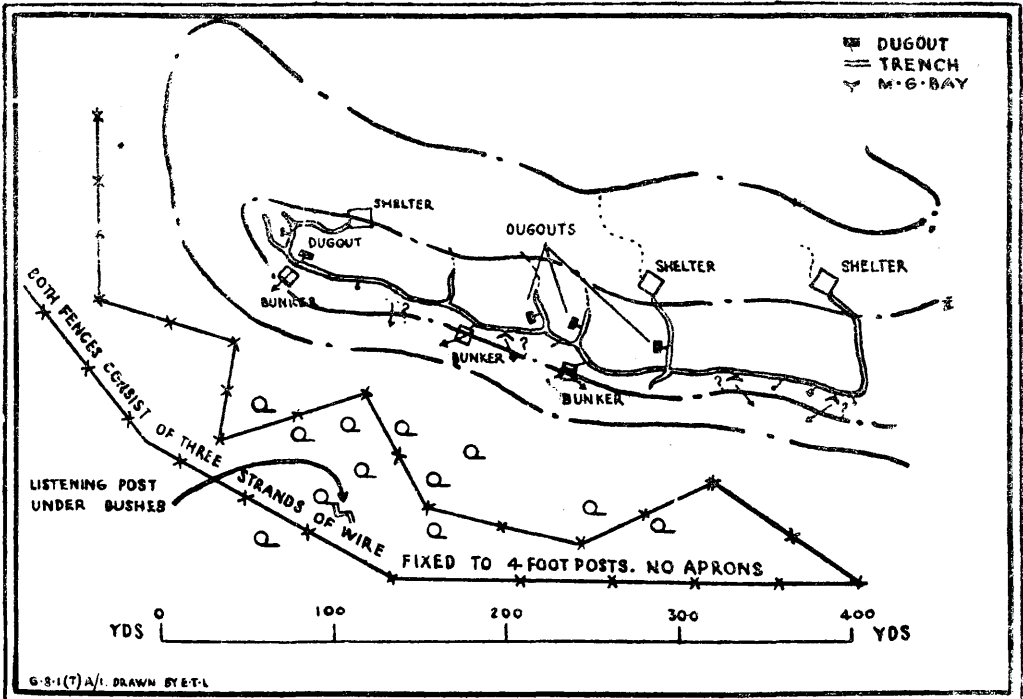
## Example 1

### The defences on "Massif" or "162"

Massif was the name given to a mass of wooded height covering an area roughly 2000 yards by 2000 yards North of the Maungdaw—Buthidaung road near Buthidaung. The average height of this feature is 100 to 150 feet. The North-West corner of the feature was captured in March (1944).

The hill sides were very steep on this position and defences were therefore sited almost entirely on the top of the hill, reliance being placed on natural camouflage for concealment. A continuous trench along the top of the hill linked up fox-holes, fire-trenches and bunkers and was in many cases itself suitable from which to fire. Short communication trenches running from front to rear linked up fire positions with the shelters and dug-outs on the rear slopes. Small one-man or two-man dug-outs were also dug into the side of the front-to-rear communication trenches.

The three-strand wire fences were partly hidden by jungle and partly laid across open paddy fields. They could by no means be regarded as a serious obstacle and their chief interest lies in the fact that the points at which the inner fence approached nearest to the trench system were covered by M. G. emplacements. A few strands of trip wire were encountered when climbing the steep face of the hill.



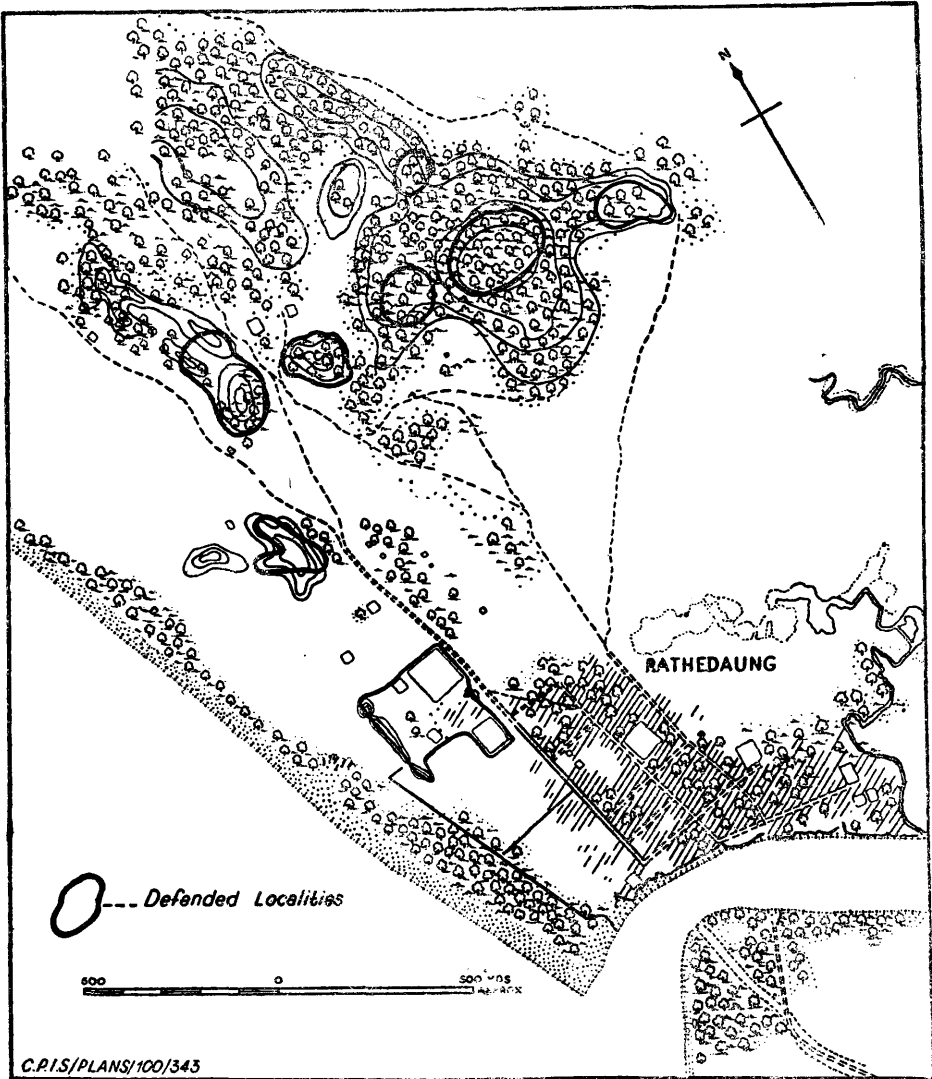
## Example 2

**A Battalion Position at Rathedaung**

Except in the case of the locality illustrated in Example 6 it is only possible to show this position generally. It is reproduced here because even without detail it gives some indication of the frontage and depth occupied by a battalion holding a defensive position amongst small thickly wooded hills. This position was held by the Japanese for some weeks, and narrow flanking movements against it failed.

Forward localities were sited on the highest ground in the sector and organized for all round defence. Trenches in the most northerly localities were continuous.

Our own positions were North of those shown in the sketch map.



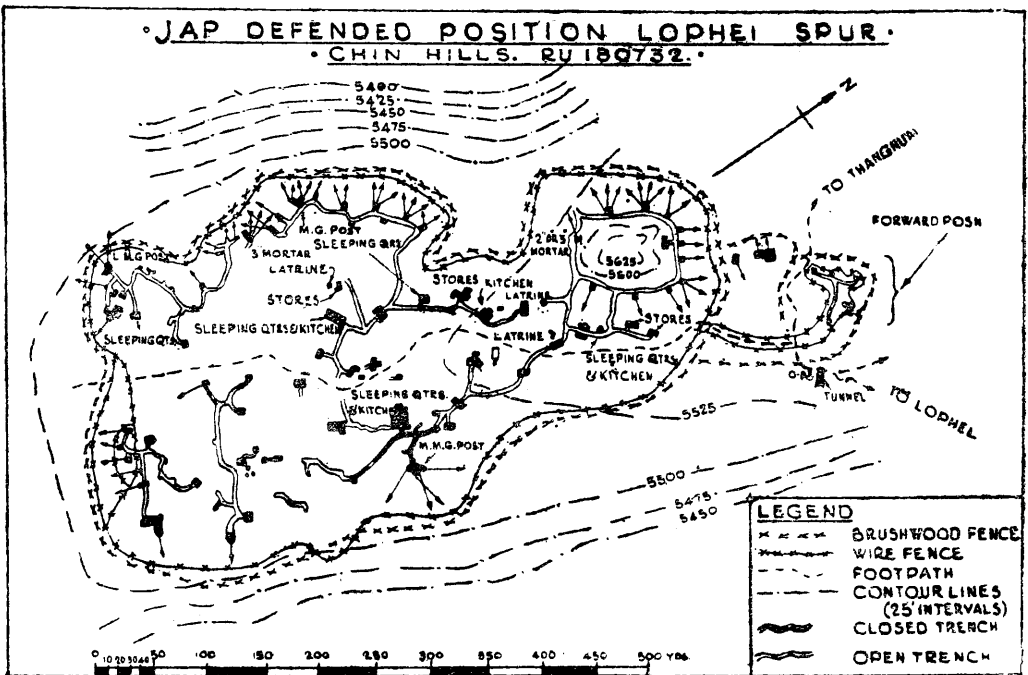


## Example 3

**Lophei Spur, Chin Hills**

The Japanese position on the Lophei Spur was built for a garrison of one to two companies. The defence system was based on a few bunkers connected up to a large number of one-man posts designed for riflemen. These had no head cover, but were connected to the main communication trench by a covered trench. The occupant could remain in the covered portion during artillery fire or bombing and, as soon as the bombardment stopped, man his firing position. These communication trenches were 4 ft. to 5 ft. deep and the head cover consisted of one or two layers of pine log 8 inches to 1 ft. in diameter, with 3 ft. to 4 ft. of earth and shale over it. Headroom in most of these positions and in the accommodation shelters was from 5 ft to 6 ft.

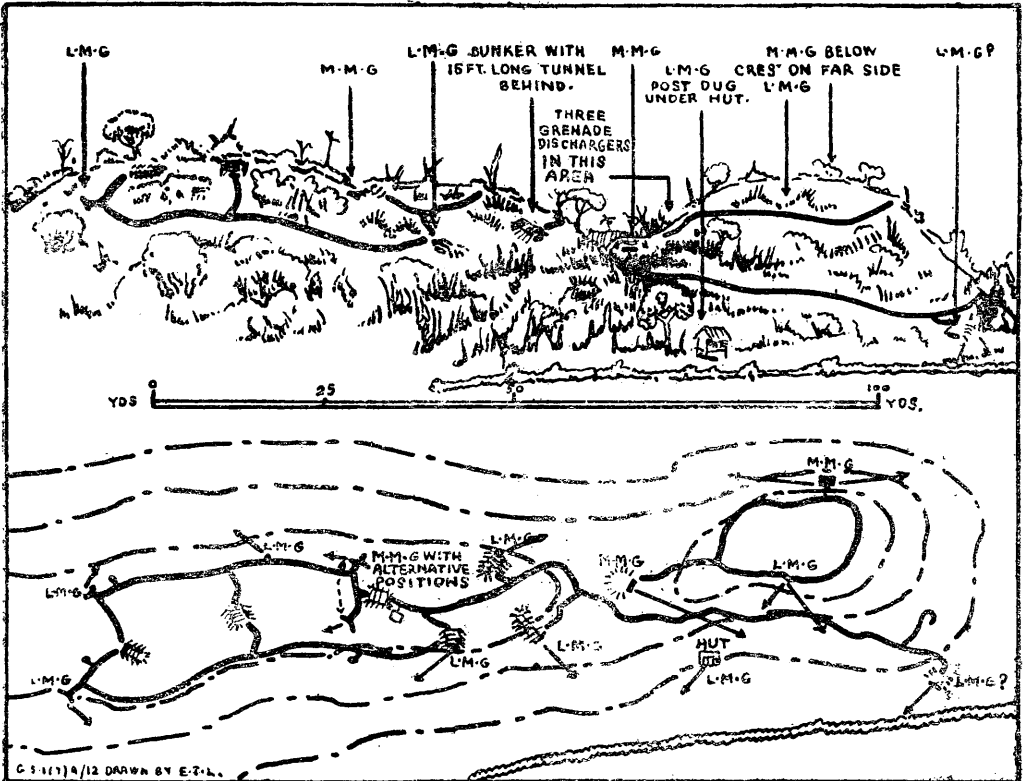
In the main bunkers firing slits were well constructed and were about 2 ft. wide inside, 6 ft. wide outside, 8 inches in depth and 2 ft. in length. No baffle walls or blast screens were provided but most of the entrances were either long or curved. It would have been difficult to get grenades into the actual chambers, but once in, they would have injured or killed all the occupants. The major bunker positions had more than one way in, so that even if one was blocked the garrison could be reinforced through another passage. All the shelters were revetted and timber was sawn and fixed together by dogs. The standard of field engineering was high; it appeared that the work had been carried out by the infantry garrison, with possibly a few engineers to assist.



## Example 4

## "Boomerang"

This is a small feature on the West bank of the Kalapanzin, North of Buthidaung, which was held by a Suicide Company (JIBAKU CHUTAI) of 4 officers and 123 men armed with 3 MMGs, 9 LMGs and 3 Grenade Dischargers. The personnel of this detachment was drawn from various companies of the same battalion. After fierce fighting the position was captured by a battalion of the 2nd Punjab Regiment. According to a prisoner of war his battalion commander had warned this company that any one returning from the position unwounded would be shot. A number of short tunnels provided deep cover for the garrison.



## Example 5

## A Platoon locality

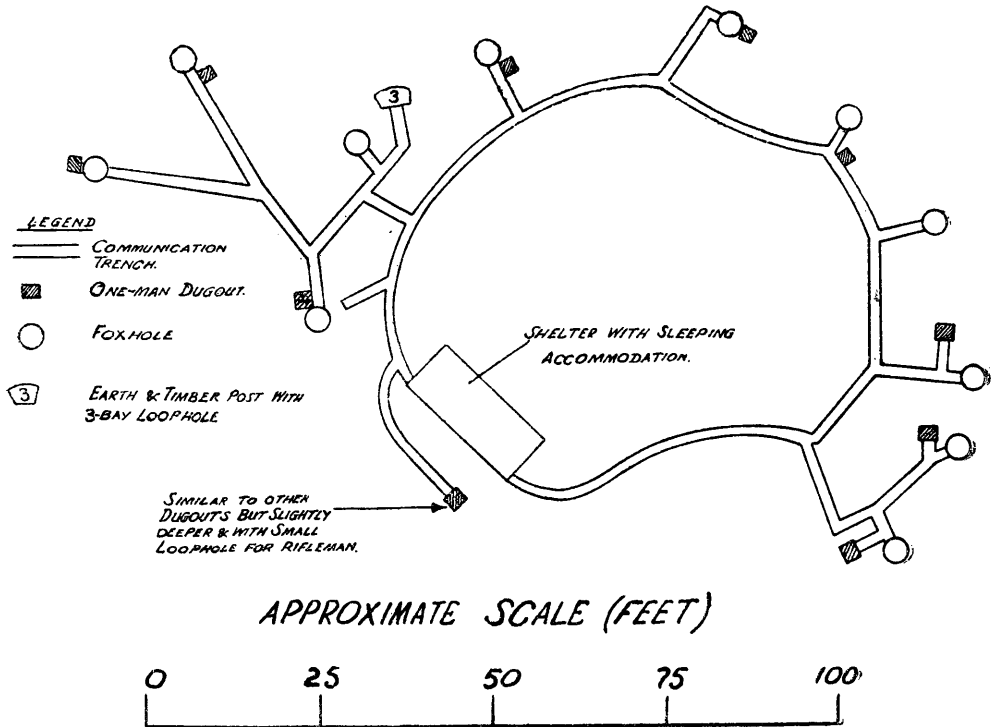
The locality illustrated below was one of three forming a company position which occupied a frontage of just under 1000 yards. Each locality was sited on a "pimple".

The area was covered with dense jungle and 50 yards was the maximum field of fire from this position until trees and bushes had been blasted away by aerial bombing.

As the localities were similar in layout and construction, only one of them—the left flank one—is described in detail below.

Each locality was surrounded by a four-strand barbed wire fence sited about 20 yards from the foxholes, the wire perimeter measuring between 200 and 300 yards.

Two interesting features of these all-round defence positions are the one-man dug-outs constructed beside almost every foxhole, and the 3-bay LMG bunker. The dug-outs are constructed at the end of a trench and have an earth and timber head cover about 12 inches thick. Diagrams of the 3-bay LMG post appear at Appendix "B", Example 1.

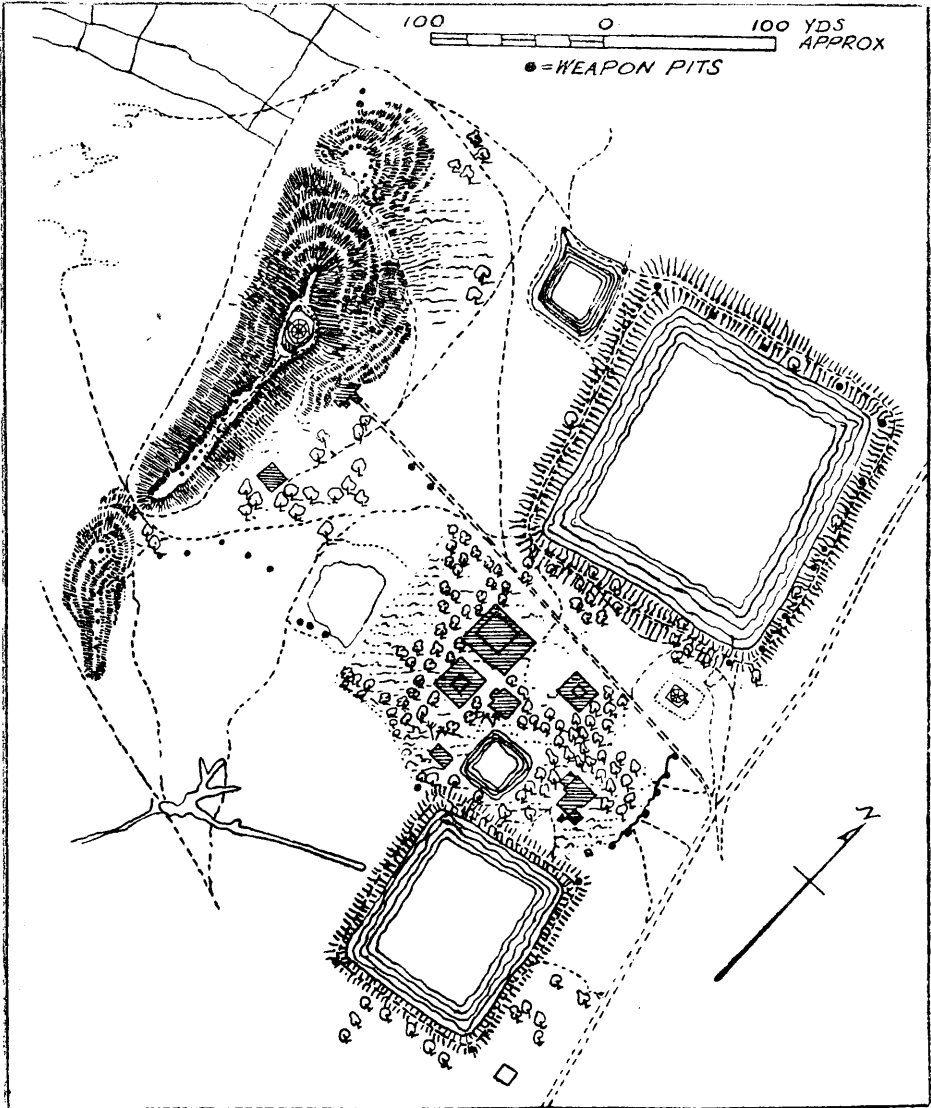


## Example 6

## Part of a Battalion Position

This is an interesting example of a defended locality consisting almost entirely of unlinked weapon pits. It is possible that at least some of those on the hill have been linked by tunnels and that shelter from the shelling and aerial bombardment to which this position was frequently subjected, has been provided by burrowing deep into the hill side. This sketch was made from an aerial photograph and therefore shows only positions visible from the air, but it can safely be assumed that the line of weapon pits was continued under the trees on the south edge of the locality. It should be noted that in this drawing a black dot has been used to indicate both foxholes and MG positions.

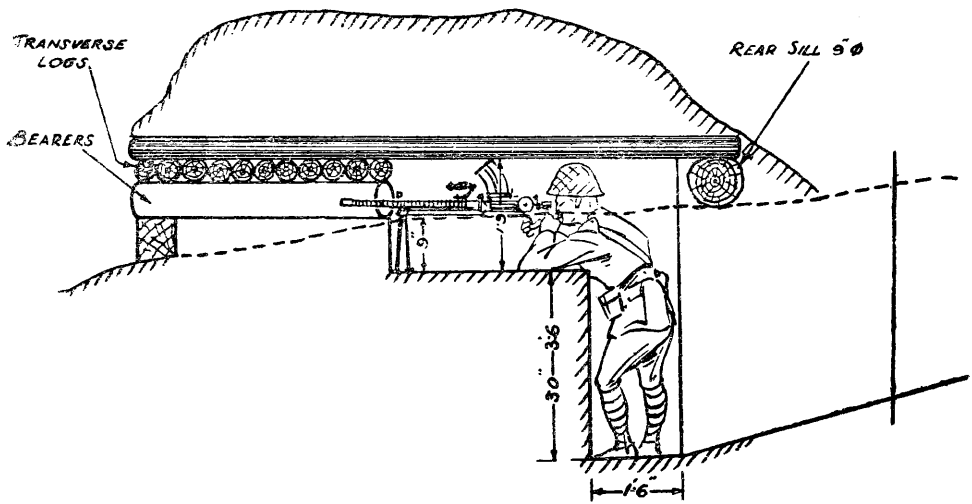
This locality will be recognized as part of the battalion position given in Example 2.



### The 3-Bay L M G Post

Diagram illustrating the construction of a trench with a log and pickets. The diagram shows a cross-section of a trench with a log and pickets. Labels include: TRANSVERSE LOGS, BEARERS, LOOPHOLE, and THESE PICKETS ONLY USED WHEN POST IS BUILT ON FORWARD SLOPE. A vertical line with 'X' marks at the top and bottom indicates the trench's depth.

**Plan showing the detailed construction of the 3-bay LMG post**

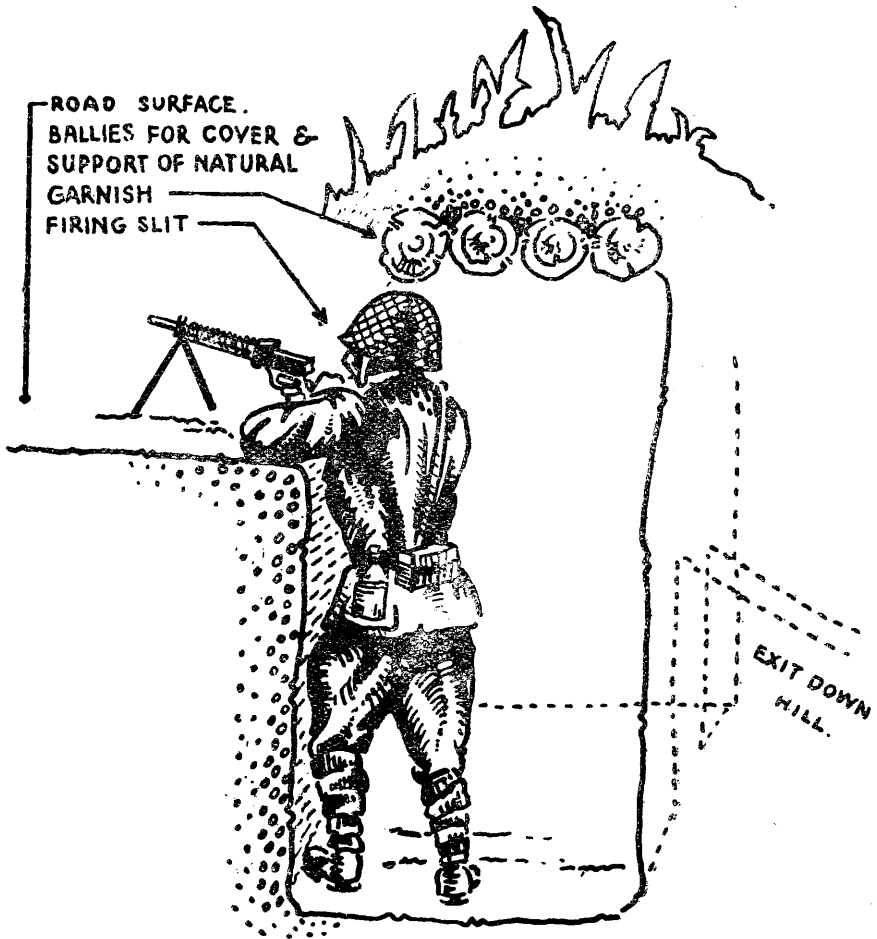


A cross-section on the line X—X

## Example 2

**Position dug into a roadside.**

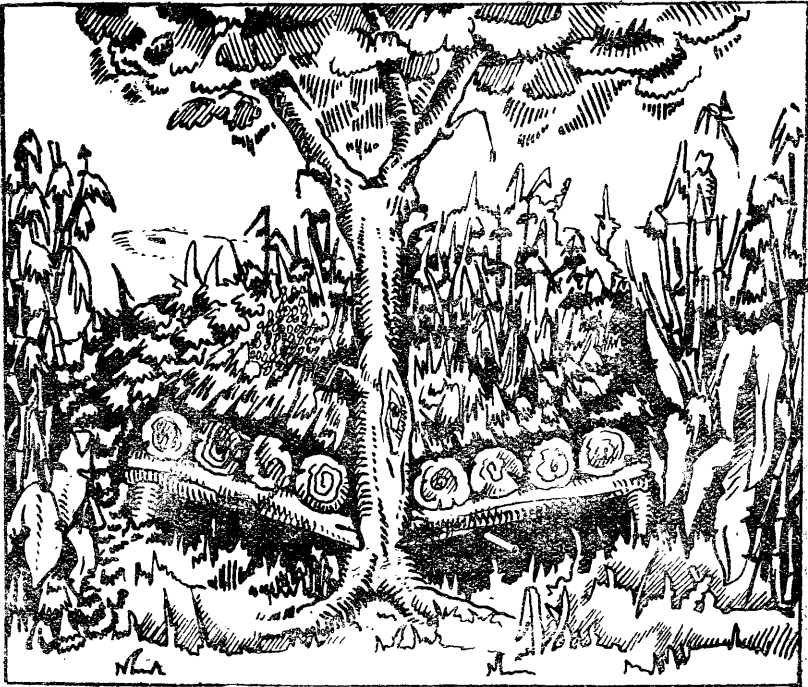
This sketch illustrates a position dug into a roadside. A number of such positions have been encountered in Burma.

L.M.G. POST COVERING ROAD APPROACH

## Example 3

**A M.M.G. Bunker.**

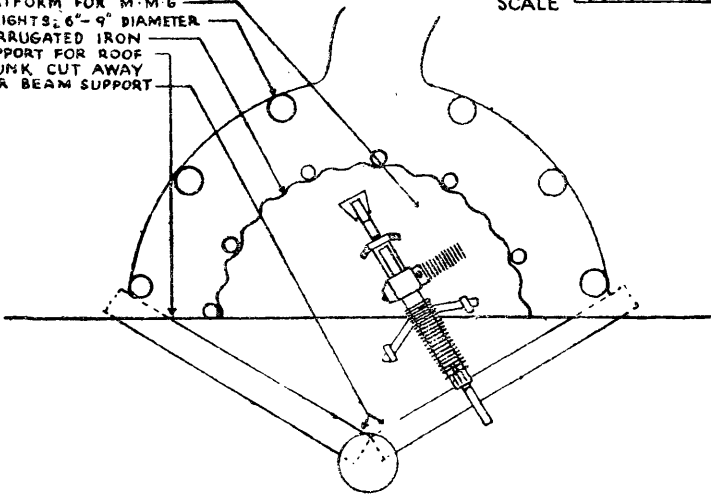
This post had 4 feet of earth on top. The logs from which the roof was constructed were 10 to 12 inches in diameter. The under-growth around was thick, tall, and undisturbed, and at a distance of 5 yards the firing slits could not be seen. The bunker was sited to cover a bend in the Kalapanzin River and its banks.



FOLIAGE REMOVED TO SHOW CONSTRUCTION  
OF BUNKER.

PLATFORM FOR M.M.G.  
UPRIGHTS, 6"-9" DIAMETER  
CORRUGATED IRON  
SUPPORT FOR ROOF  
TRUNK CUT AWAY  
FOR BEAM SUPPORT

SCALE 0 1 2 3 FT.

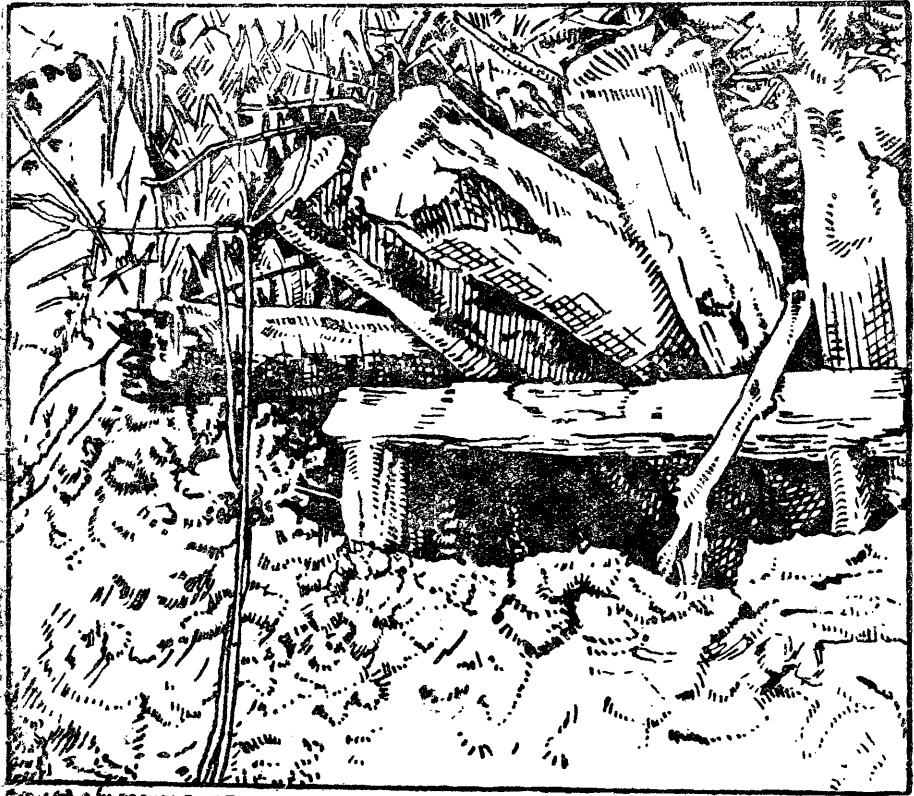




## Example 4

**Another Type of Bunker.**

The drawing below was made from a photograph showing the results of our shelling of one of the bunkers in the "Massif" position, near Buthidaung. Other bunkers were completely obliterated, leaving only a shambles of timber, earth and corrugated iron. All had been pinpointed and destroyed before we launched our attack on the position.



C.S. 1 (7) 4/11 DRAWN BY E.T.L.

## APPENDIX "C"

## An Example of Japanese Offensive Tactics, Arakan—February, 1944

## COMPOSITION OF JAPANESE FORCES ENGAGED—GIVEN IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY APPEAR IN THE NARRATIVE.

**Tanahashi Force**

Comd. Col. Tanahashi.  
 112 Inf. Regt. (less 1 Bn., less one M.M.G. Pl.).  
 1 Bn., 143 Inf. Regt. (less 5 Coy.), (one mtn. gun attd.).  
 3 Bn., 55 Mtn. Arty. Regt. (Mtn. guns 2, Light mortars 4).  
 55 Engineer Regt. (less one Coy. and two Pls, but with main strength of 10 River Crossing Materials Coy. attd.).  
 One Sec. Div. Wireless.  
 Medical and Water Purifying personnel.

**Kubo Force**

1 Bn., 213 Inf. Regiment (less one Coy. and one MMG Pl.).

**Sakurai Div. Inf. Group**

Comd. Maj. Gen. Sakurai.  
 55 Div. Inf. Group HQ. and protection troops.  
 Div. Inf. Group Wireless Sec.  
 Water Purifying personnel.

**Doi Force**

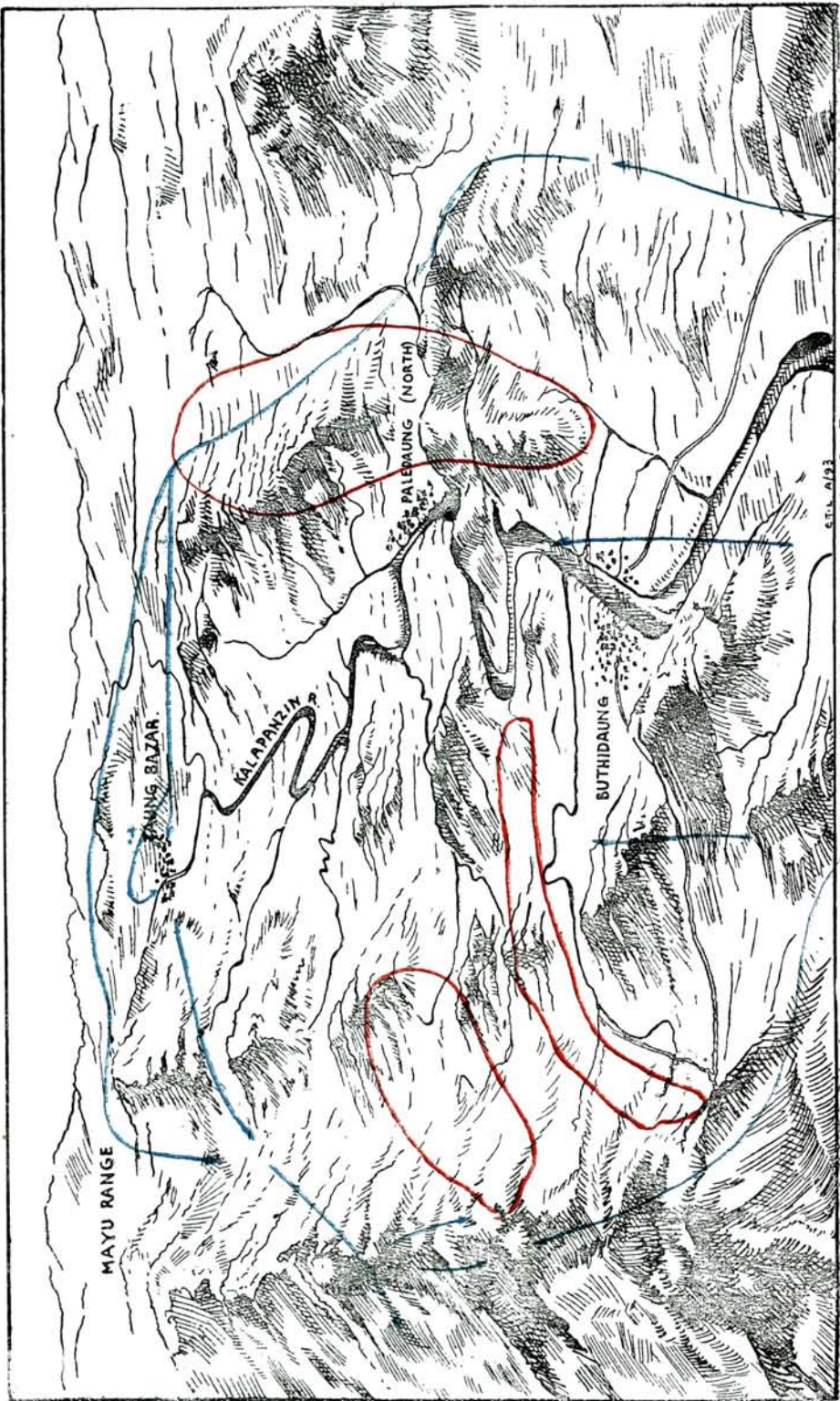
Comd. Col. Doi.  
 143 Inf. Regt. (less 2 Bn., less 5 Coy.).  
 2 Coy. Med. Arty. (less one Pl.).  
 2 Bn. and 8 Coy. Mtn. Arty.  
 One Pl. Engineers.  
 One Sec. of Div. Wireless.  
 Medical Detachment.

**The Japanese Plan**

After the monsoon the opposing forces advanced towards each other until, by the end of January, their dispositions were those shown approximately on Map 1. Towards the end of January the Japanese appreciated that we were building up our strength in the area North of Buthidaung, and in order to forestall any plans we may have had in view, they decided to assume the offensive. This was originally to have been launched about the middle of February, but, in view of the progress of our own preparations, the attack actually took place a fortnight earlier. The Japanese plan was an ambitious one and was intended first to drive out and destroy our division East of the Mayu Range, and then to destroy our division West of the Mayu Range. It was assumed that under the pressure of this offensive these two divisions would be driven into the Naf River. The Japanese force with which this narrative deals was, therefore, not only intended to destroy our forces East of the Mayu Range, but also to cross the range and destroy our division which was in the Maungdaw area.

On the night of 3/4 February the Tanahashi and Kubo forces left the Dabrugyaung area and moved North up the East side of the Kalapanzin River (see Map 2), passing through an area occupied by one of our brigades without being seen or heard. By the morning of 4 February they had reached Taung Bazar without meeting any opposition. 2 Battalion, 143 Regiment attacked this place from the West and captured it after slight resistance.

This battalion then formed a bridgehead West of the Kalapanzin River, and the rest of the force, less 2 Battalion 112 Regiment, crossed the river, and concentrated in the area 3 miles West of Taung Bazar. 2 Battalion 112 Regiment, which had been detached before the main force reached Taung Bazar, by-passed our positions and crossed the river some 5 miles North of that place.



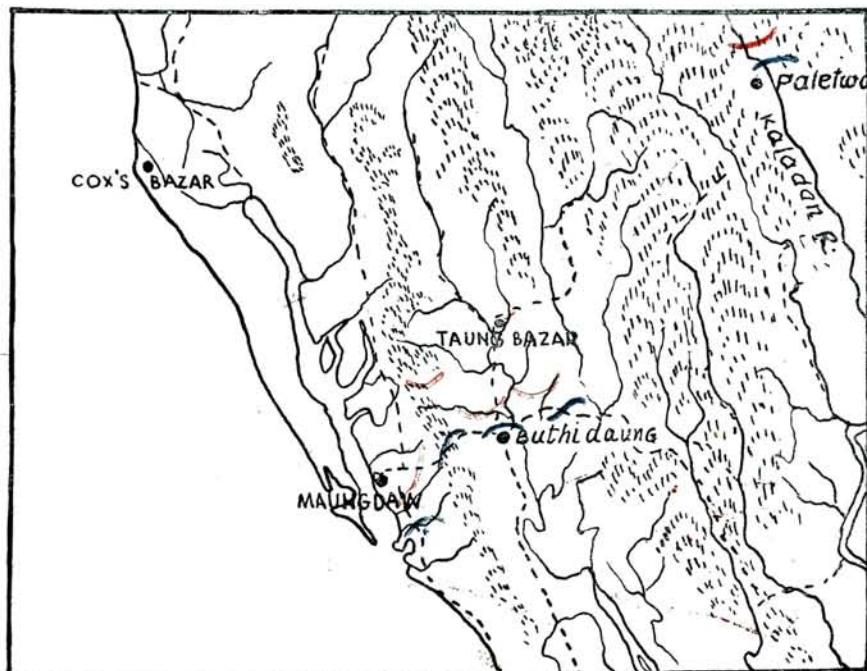
Drawing showing the general encirclement attempted by the Japanese.



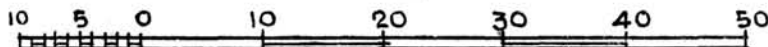
On 5 February the Tanahashi and Kubo Forces were again divided. 2 Battalion 112 Regiment advanced southward towards the hills in the area of Shwechaing (see Map 3) to prevent our withdrawal Westward through the pass at the foot of which Shwechaing lies. They did not however, stay here, but continued South towards Ngakyedauk. Our tanks met this battalion in the area of Badana and inflicted heavy casualties, preventing further advance to Shwechaing by daylight. The Japanese, however, reached this objective that night (5/6 February).

In the meanwhile, the rest of this force advanced South with the intention of seizing the East end of the Ngakyedauk Pass, but at midday on 5 February they met serious opposition at Ingyang. Here, they attacked all day but failed to dislodge our troops and fell back incurring considerable losses.

Kubo force crossed the Mayu Range, leap-frogging through 2 Battalion 112 Regiment at Shwechaing and reaching the Bawli-Maungdaw Road in the area of Chota Maunghnama on the night of 5/6 February. Here, they damaged three bridges, and withdrew into the foot hills, contact then being lost.



MILES



MAP 1

During the night 5/6 February 2 Battalion 112 Regiment infiltrated southwards, and by 0400 hours 6 February they had reached the area at the East end of the Ngakyedauk Pass. At 0500 hours they attacked and overran our divisional headquarters, but were later driven out.

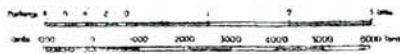
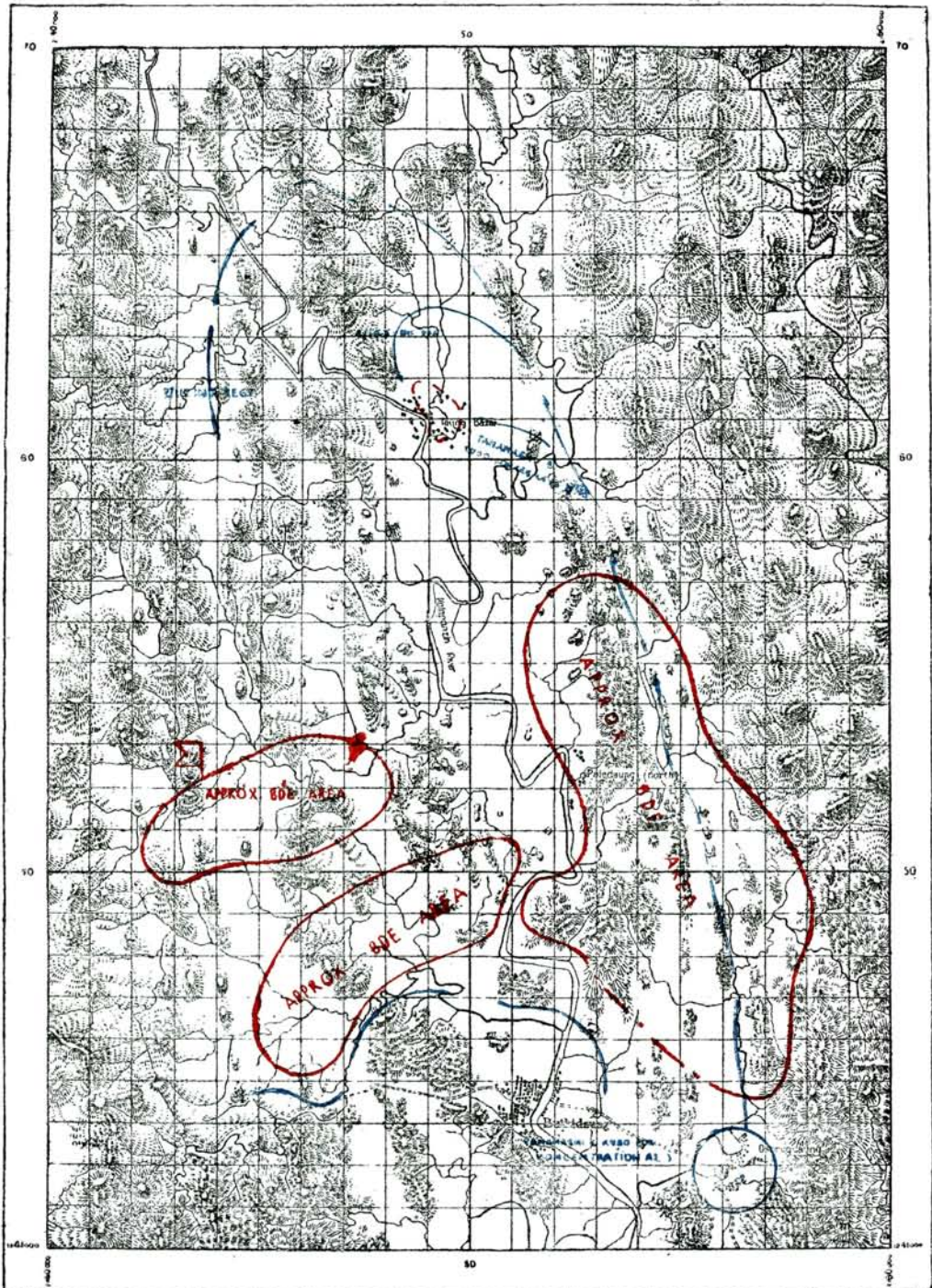
Major General Sakurai, who was directing the operation, now decided that he could not wait for Colonel Tanahashi to close the Ngakyedauk Pass, and frontal attacks were made repeatedly on 6 and 7 February in the Sinohbyin area, 2 Battalion 114 Regiment, which had just been brought forward, taking part. All these attacks were repulsed.

Meanwhile, 2 Battalion 112 Regiment had established a strong road block on the Ngakyedauk Pass and were attacking the southern end. Enemy troops had succeeded in infiltrating along the Eastern slopes of the Mayu Ridge during the night 6/7th February, and there were about 100 Japanese South of Kreingyaung on the Tatmin Chaung. This chaung was being used by the enemy as an L. of C. Between 60 and 70 coolies carrying rations were captured by us at Tatmin-gyaungwa on 7 February.

The situation in the Ingyang area had become very confused, small parties of our own and Japanese troops becoming inextricably mixed, so that the latter could make no concerted attack.

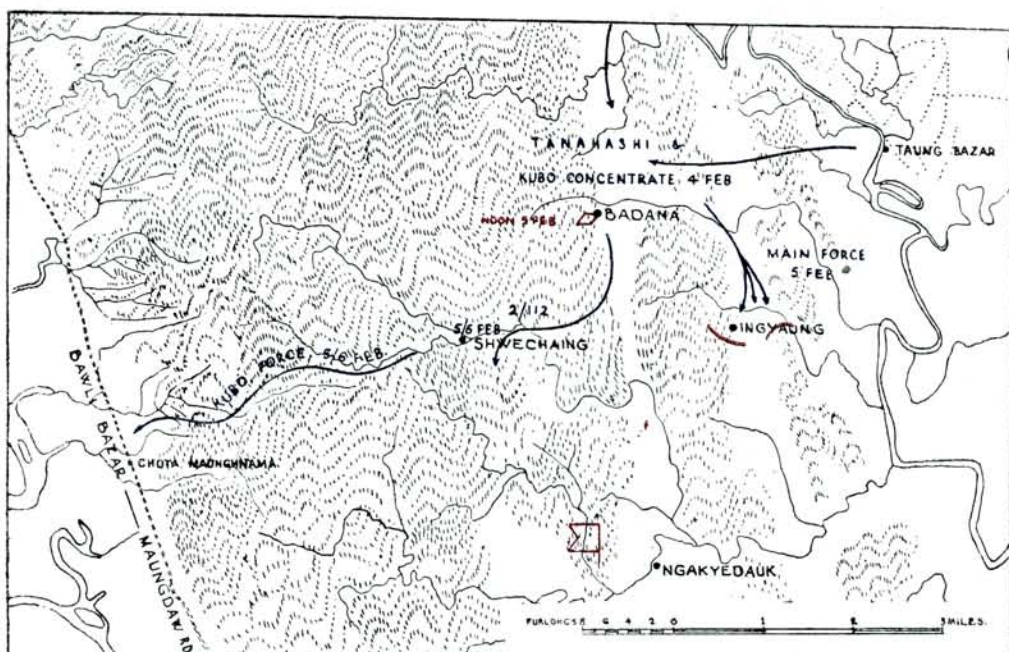
From 7 to 9 February numerous small actions were fought, but without any decisive result. On 9th February Doi Force, in position astride the Mayu Range, continued to launch diversionary attacks on the main front, and extended this activity to Maungdaw.



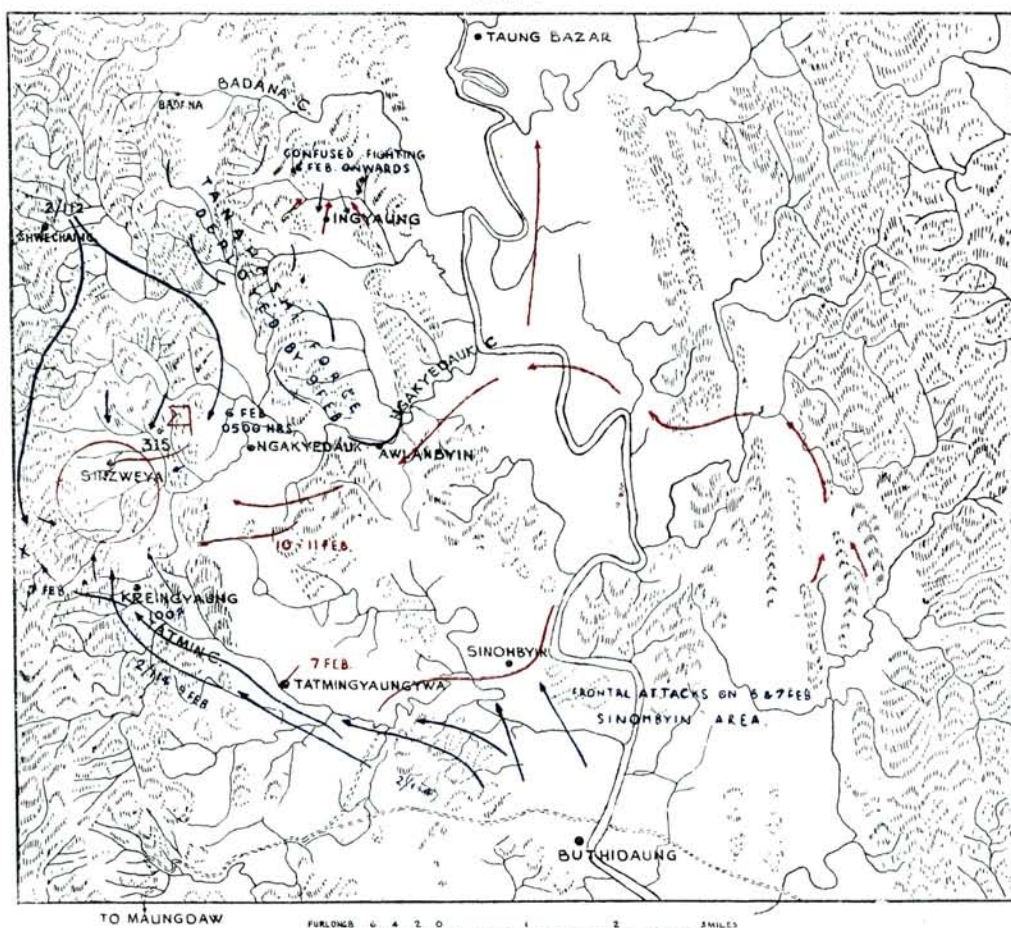


MAP 2





MAP 3



MAP 4

Meanwhile, Colonel Tanahashi had been pushing that part of his main body which was still concentrated South from Ingyaung through the hills, and by 9 February this force was spread out from the Badana Chaung south through the hills to Awlanbyin.

Lt. General Hanaya, the Commander of the Division, had by now abandoned hope of destroying our divisions West of the Range, and ordered the Tanahashi Force to concentrate in Sinzweya area with the intention of destroying our forces there. On the same day we began to attack the Japanese in the area of the pass, where we captured positions and held them in spite of heavy counter-attacks by the Japanese on 10 and 11 February. The Japanese still held positions covering the Pass.

During 9 and 10 February, the Japanese, as ordered, had been heavily attacking in the Sinzweya—Ngakyedauk area from North and South. The bulk of the Tanahashi Force was in the area Hill 315, and 2 battalion 144 Regiment had been taken from the Sinohbyin area for this attack, but the Japanese were unable to achieve any success.

By 11 February the Japanese had been put on the defensive generally, except in the areas Ngangyaung Bawli Road and on the Eastern slopes of the Mayu Range West of Ngakyedauk, where he was concentrating his efforts against our divisional box. By 13 February the Japanese had lost the initiative, and were suffering from difficulties of supply of both ammunition and food. From this date onwards the action became defensive on the Japanese side, while they attempted to withdraw.

The operation had provided another instance of how the Japanese, over-confident from their early successes, are inclined to use the minimum troops which they think are required to do the job. In this they diverge from German teachings which they follow so closely in many other respects. In this case, they used the minimum force and kept no reserves; and, when the operation failed, Colonel Tanahashi upon whose force the effectiveness of the encircling movement depended was, after being put on L. of C. duties in charge of the collection of supplies, sent back to Japan.

## APPENDIX "D".—EXAMPLES OF NIGHT ATTACKS IN BURMA

## Example 1

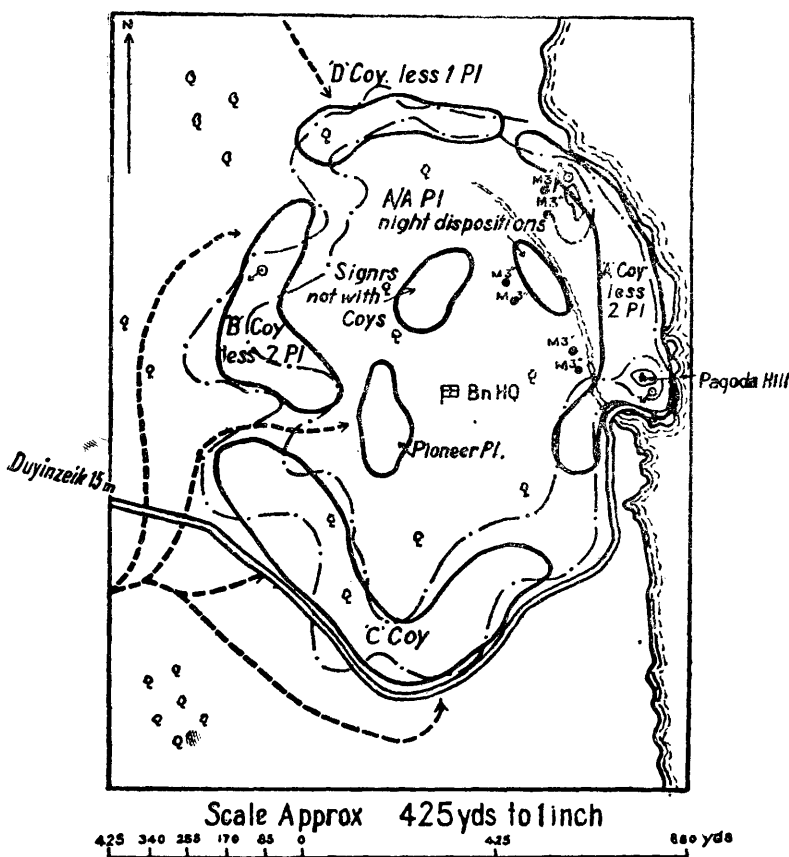
**The Battle of Pa-an**

On 8 February 1942 a battalion of the Baluch Regiment took up a position at Kuzeik, a village on the west bank of the Salween River. The position occupied was a saucer of open paddy land, surrounded by close jungle with thick undergrowth. The main road from Duyinzeik bounded the south of the position and then ran north along the river.

On the opposite bank of the river, 1,200 yards away, the Japanese occupied the town of Pa-an. The role of the Baluch battalion was to prevent this Japanese force crossing the river in the Pa-an area.

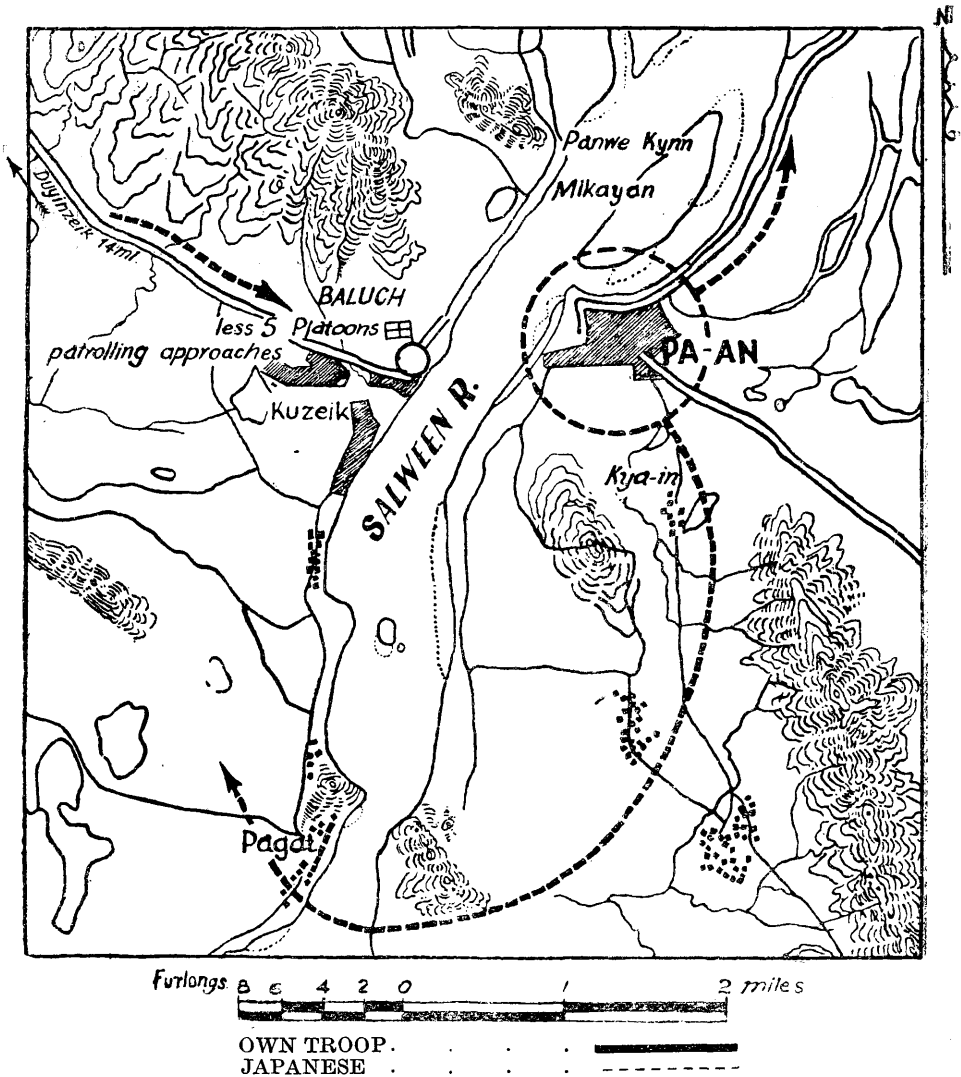
To accomplish this the battalion was disposed around the saucer with battalion headquarters in the centre. "A" Company held the river bank, "D" Company the northern face, "B" Company the western face and "C" Company the southern face of the perimeter along the Duyinzeik road. In addition, patrols were constantly maintained along the river bank to Pagat in the South and Mikayan in the North.

During the night of 10/11 February one of these patrols reported that the enemy had crossed the river near Pagat in strength. The patrol was over-run and a force was sent from Kuzeik to assist it. The advance of this force was shadowed by the Japanese throughout its route, its position being signalled by the tapping of bamboos. However, it drove off the enemy.

**Notes:-**

- (1) Country very wooded. Undergrowth considerable. (2) Field of fire very limited- 50-150 yds. (3) Bn occupied a 'Saucer' Fighting elements on fringe with HQ in bowl





On the morning and afternoon of 11th February parties of the enemy were observed crossing the river north of Pa-an, and that evening patrols also reported the advance from Pagat in the South towards Kuzeik of a strong enemy force of about one battalion.

At 1630 hours a small force attacked the Kuzeik position from the South along the river bank. A counter attack by "C" Company resulted in the withdrawal of the Japanese.

The enemy were next seen about 0100 hours when a section posted on the road one mile from our positions at Kuzeik reported that a battalion of Japanese were advancing in strength from the direction of Duyinzeik.

A quarter of an hour later the main battalion positions were attacked from the West and South—west, the brunt of the first attack falling on "C" Company. Later attacks were also directed against "B" and "D" Companies from the North-West. The enemy made cat calls and shouted and chattered incessantly in an effort to draw fire and locate our positions: they also employed tracer ammunition and Chinese crackers.

It was now estimated that the Japanese had deployed a whole regiment, and this superiority in numbers was having its effect on our defences. At 0230 hours, infiltrating between "B" and "C" Companies the enemy attacked "B" Company from the rear. "D" Company was also heavily engaged and the enemy had occupied its West flank. Meanwhile, attacks were being made on battalion headquarters and on "A" Company.

The attacks were made in waves, each wave consisting of several parties of 10 to 15 men. These were armed with swords, bayonets and grenades and were supported by automatic weapons. Each party advanced in short rushes, the men lying prone after each advance.

By first light "B" and "D" Company positions had fallen into enemy hands and "A" Company was surrounded. There remained only a very weak "C" Company and Battalion Headquarters after the night's fighting. The enemy made an attack but this was thrown back by the superior strength of the Japanese.

By 0800 hours the enemy occupied the whole of the Kazeik position.

*Comment.*—This operation serves as a good example not only of the night attack but also of characteristic Japanese methods. Note the wide enveloping movement; the full force of the attack came in along the defenders L. of C., whilst all enemy activity observed up till fifteen minutes before the night attack had been on their South flank.

Once again the enemy used their now familiar methods of drawing fire.

The parties of 12 to 15 men were probably sections, and advancing by rushes was often reported during the early phases of the Japanese war.

## Example 2

### An attack in the Upper Chindwin

A report of an attack on a camp in the Upper Chindwin Area states that the Japanese managed to creep up absolutely silently and unobserved by our sentries, almost to the perimeter of the camp. Decoy noises were made on three sides of the perimeter, and were immediately followed by an attack on the fourth side. The enemy succeeded in penetrating the perimeter, and four of them got in and made for the wireless station.

The attack was beaten off, but an hour later the enemy attacked again, using similar tactics, except that, on this occasion, a green flare was employed, lighting up the camp for about five minutes. This attack was also repulsed, and the enemy launched a third just before dawn. This attack was similar to the other two, and after about twenty minutes a red Verry light was fired, and the enemy withdrew.

*Comment.*—There are two points worthy of note here. The first is the deceptive tactics, which the enemy normally employs; the second is the use of flares for signalling. The Japanese uses these both by day and by night.

On this occasion again, the Japanese made repeated attacks during the hours of darkness, finally withdrawing at daybreak.

## Example 3

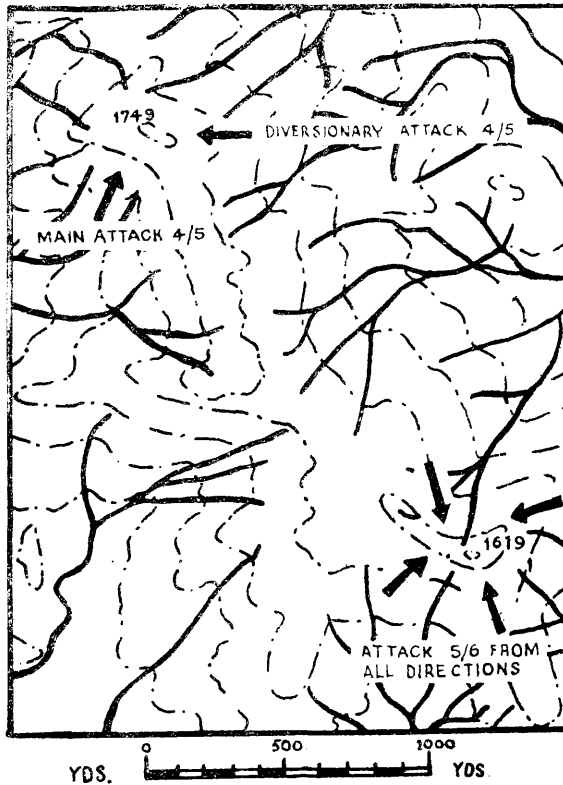
**Diversionsary Tactics**

During the nights of 4/5 and 5/6 November, 1943, the Japanese attacked our positions in the area of pts. 1619 and 1749. On the night of 4/5 November, at about 2345 hours, the Pt. 1749 feature was attacked by a party from the South-West. At the same time a diversionsary attack was made by another party of enemy from the East with rifle and grenade discharger fire. The attack was beaten off without casualties to ourselves, and, although enemy movement was heard throughout the night, no further attack was made.

The attack on the night of 5/6 November commenced at about 1945 hours and continued until 0300 hours. There was then a lull of some two hours, after which the enemy put in an attack which continued until daylight, when he finally withdrew. This attack was put in on the Pt. 1619 feature, and is estimated to have been made by one or two platoons. Rifles, L.M.Gs. and grenade dischargers were used, and the enemy attacked from all directions. He succeeded in cutting all telephone lines in the area, but wireless communication was established in the morning. Prior to the attack the enemy created a lot of noise, shouting and whistling, etc.

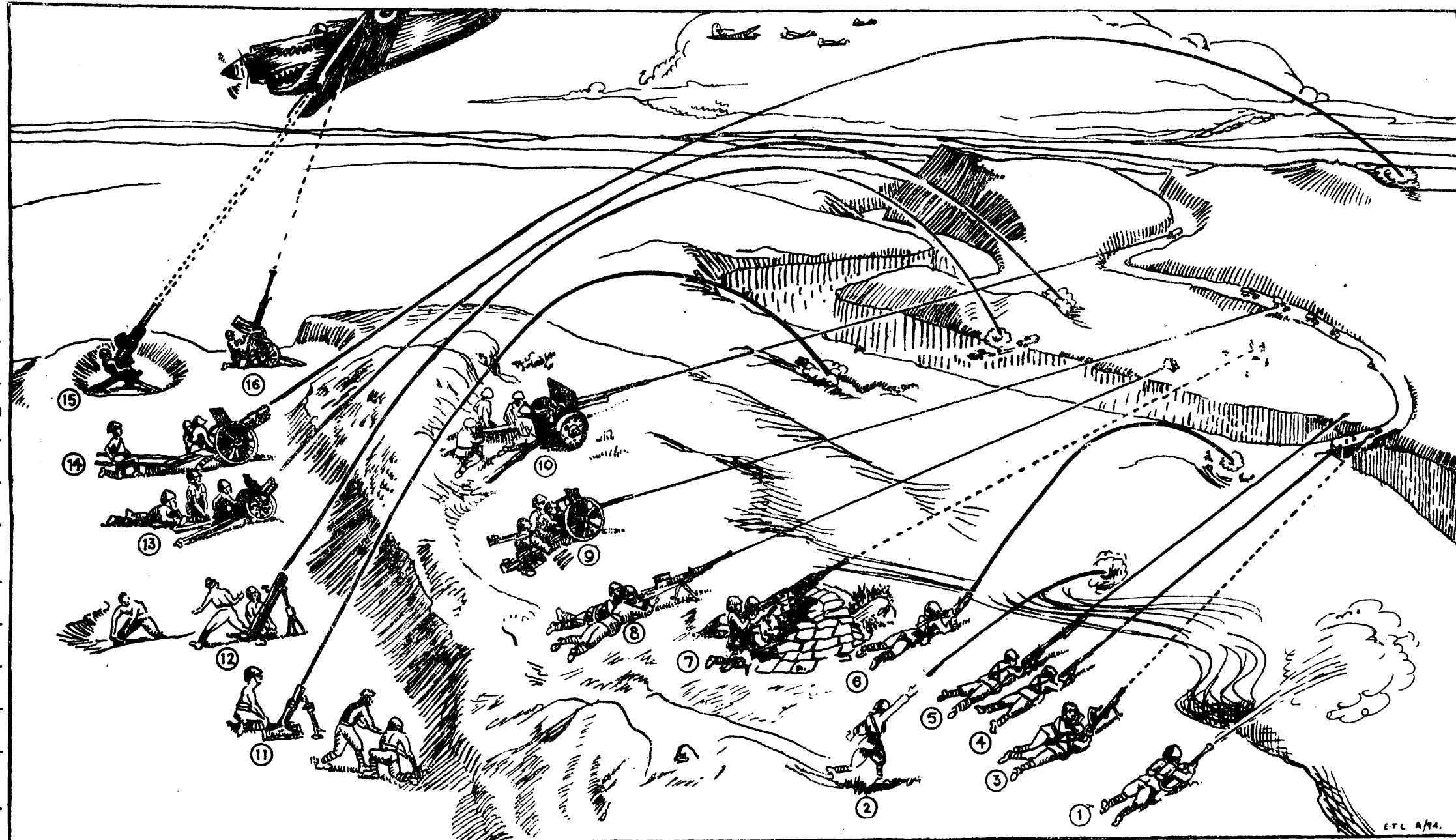
**Comment**

Note that a diversionsary attack may be made at night as well as during daylight. Here the silent approach was sacrificed in the hope that noise would give the impression of large numbers and affect our morale.



UNCLASSIFIED

	Weapon	Weight (Pounds)	Action	Max. Range (Yards)	Effective Range (Yards)	Rate of Fire (R. P. M.)
1	Flame thrower—					
	Type "100" . . . . .	68 (empty)	..	30	..	..
	Type "93" . . . . .	32 (empty)	..	30	..	..
	Type "93" (modified)	32 (empty)	..	30	..	..
2	Hand grenade—					
	Type "91" (1931) . . . . .	1.175	4.5 secs. delay fuze.			
	Type "97" (1937) . . . . .	1				
	Type "99A" . . . . .	10 ozs.				
3	Type "99" (1939) 7.7 mm (.30 in) LMG . . . . .	21.36	Automatic	3,800	1,500	800 (cyclic)
	or Type "96" (1936) 6.5 mm (.256 in) LMG. . . . .	20.5	Automatic		220-1760	550
4	Type "99" 7.7 mm. rifle . . . . .	8.8	Manual	3,000	328-1,640	
5	Meiji 38 (1905) 6.5 mm. rifle (long). . . . .	9.4	Manual	2,640	440-2,640	
6	Type "89" (1929) 50 mm. (1.96 ins) grenade discharger	10.25	M. L.	175-770		
7	Type "92" (1932) 7.7 mm. MMG. . . . .	122	Automatic	4,587	1,500	450(cyclic)
8	Type "97" (1937) 20 mm. (.78 in) A. Tk. rifle . . . . .	150	Automatic		1,100	
9	Type "94" (1934) 37 mm. (1.45 ins.) A. Tk. gun . . . . .	815	SA/QF	5,450	400	10-20
10	Type "1" (1941) 47 mm. (1.85 ins.) A. Tk. gun . . . . .	1,660	SA/QF	8,000 (Approx.)		10-20
11	Type "99" 81 mm. (3.18 ins.) mortar . . . . .	52	M. L.	550— 3,280		15
12	Type "94" (1934) 90 mm. (3.54 ins.) mortar . . . . .	340	M. L.	600-4,150		15
13	Type "92" 70 mm. (2.75 ins.) battalion gun . . . . .	468	Manual	3,075	1,500	10
14	Meiji 41 (1908) 75 mm. (2.95 ins.) mountain regimental gun	1,220	QF	7,675	2,100	10
15	Type "93" (1933) 13 mm. (.51 in) twin HMG . . . . .		Automatic			450-480 (cyclic)
16	Type "98" (1938) . . . . . 20 mm. AA/A. Tk. gun . . . . .	836	Automatic or single shot.	12,000 ft. (vertical), 5,450 yards ho- rizontal)		120 (cyclic).



A drawing showing the ranges and characteristics of various Japanese infantry weapons.